



Goethe at the age of seventy-nine

LETTERS FROM GOETHE

J. W. von Goethe

Translated by

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Introduction by

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FOREWORD

THE number of letters which Goethe wrote is unknown. The great *Weimar* edition of his works contains 13,168 letters. Since this appeared a considerable number more have been found and published.

The present collection contains five hundred and ninety-five letters (some only in part). As this means that for every letter chosen about twenty-two had to be omitted, it seems necessary to say something about the principles of selection.

The aim has been twofold; to present—and this is the principal intention—the reader with a picture of Goethe's personality and also with a picture of the age in which he lived. Goethe's personality is so complex and rich that it seemed necessary, to convey even a general idea of it, to cover a very wide field; to include, for example, letters of the student who was hardly more than a boy, of the young man who typified the Storm-and-Stress period, letters to his adored Frau von Stein, the loving letters to his wife and to his mother, the friendly, fatherly letters to his son and daughter-in-law, the letters on topical questions, literature, art, philosophy, music, on botany and anatomy, on mineralogy and geology, on his collections, his official and political interests, the theatre and the university, and the letters he wrote on his travels and during the campaign against the Revolutionary French armies. His letters cover a period of sixty-seven years, and vary from a line or two—the sort which to-day would be replaced by a telephone call—to many pages in length.

One can hardly suppose that many readers will share all Goethe's manifold interests, and one may assume that anyone taking up such a collection as this wishes to read the letters of a poet and not those of an osteologist.

For this reason comparatively little space has been given to letters which deal in the main with scientific questions. This gives a somewhat distorted picture of Goethe; for there were times when he considered the tasks he had set himself in science as important as his literary work. The balance at least has been restored, for it seemed unsuitable to present the non-German reader either with detailed questions concerning German literature—including

Goethe's own works—or with literary problems illustrated by examples from it.

In as far as Goethe's works are concerned the reader loses little by the omission, since it is rare to find in the letters—except in those to Schiller—more than a passing mention that he is working on, or has completed, such and such.

Attention may here be drawn to two other things notable for their absence, due not to omission but to two of Goethe's essential characteristics. Among the thirteen thousand letters there are hardly more than a score or so with disparaging remarks about people, nor are there more frequent instances of complaints originating in gloom or despondency. His letters thus confirm what his works reveal, his faith in his fellow men, and his optimism.

In his autobiography, *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Goethe has drawn attention to the intimate connection between his life and his writings. He says there that his lifelong habit was to turn whatever pleased, troubled, or otherwise occupied him, into an image, a poem, and to finish with it, not only in order to clarify his ideas on subjects outside himself, but also to set his mind at rest. Thus it is, he continues, that everything of his that has become known amounts simply to fragments of a great confession, which his autobiography makes the attempt to complete.

Goethe later added to this 'confession' by publishing his correspondence with Schiller; and he prepared his correspondence with his friend Zelter, the musician, to be issued after his death. Every further publication of his letters serves the same purpose. And though nothing can take the place of the experience derived from reading his works, for those who know the works only in part or in translation, the letters may afford some notion of his stature, and evoke the image of a unique personality.

Edinburgh, 1956

M. H.

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INTRODUCTION

IT IS AN exaggeration to say, as Goethe once did, that letters are the most important monument a man can leave behind him, but before it was possible to record the living voice, letters could often give almost the illusion of doing so, and it is in their letters that we come nearest to knowing, as their friends knew them, men who have raised far more important monuments to their own memory. In the case of a poet, especially one like Goethe, who wrote above all of the experiences of his mind and heart, they are, after the works, the one indispensable source for his biographers, illuminating as they do the events of his life, the origin, progress and immediate effect of his writings and his relations with his contemporaries. With him, as with other artists, they also help the reader to distinguish the poet's everyday personality from his literary personality, the mask he consciously or unconsciously assumed in his work. In spite of the justifiable insistence of the New Criticism on the irrelevance of biographical information to the purely aesthetic appreciation of literature, we are still as eager as ever to know our favourite writers 'as they really were', and we can quote Goethe himself if we maintain that such an interest is not unintelligent or philistine, but human and inevitable. 'The individual is lost to our sight; the memory of him vanishes, and yet he and others desire that it should be preserved. Each of us is himself only an individual and can really only interest himself in what is individual. What is general takes no finding, thrusts itself upon us, maintains and propagates itself. We make use of it, but we do not love it. We love only the individual; hence our great joy in addresses, confessions, memoirs, letters and anecdotes of the departed, even if they were people of no importance.'

Apart from the absorbing interest of what his letters tell us about the individual Goethe and his literary work, they are a mirror of the cultural life of his times. Goethe was not primarily an observer of the social scene, and he lived too far from the centres of power to form first-hand impressions of the leaders in the world of action. In him, as in most cultivated Germans of his day, personal relationships and intellectual interests are the central preoccupations, but

from first to last his contacts with life grew steadily in their range and integration, so that in maturity, from his home in the miniature capital Weimar, with 6000 inhabitants, of a duchy about as big as Westmorland, he came to survey the intellectual and artistic life of his age, and their roots in history, with a 'panoramic' completeness never approached by any one man since.

Spontaneity of feeling and expression are the mark of Goethe's letters in his youth when, like the poet of the Prologue in the Theatre in *Faust* he 'plucked the myriad blossoms that filled the valleys' and 'the bud still promised miracles'. He seemed to have feelers out to life on every side and to desire nothing so much as to retain indefinitely the capacity to feel and experience, 'to keep his future open', as Paul Valéry has well said of him. After a boyhood spent in Frankfort on the Main, for a picture of which we must turn to his autobiography, *Poetry and Truth*, he went at sixteen to study in Leipzig, and during his three years there wrote frequent letters to his Frankfort friends and to his sister Cornelia. They are carelessly written chronicles, adapted to the recipient, usually in a gay and confident tone, but the writer uses the phrase 'we poets' and frequently breaks into verse of various kinds, in French and English as well as German. This is the boy who since he was thirteen has been writing 500 quarto pages of verse a year and is never at a loss for a word. To give his sister practice in languages he writes as much in French or English as in German, and includes passages for his father in Latin. Telling his sister about his new Leipzig friends, including 'la petite Schoenkopf', he assures her that they are all 'plus bonnes que belles', but to the tutor Behrisch a little later he writes in a more sophisticated tone, an adolescent pretending to be deeply in love. 'Ha! Imagine me! in the gallery, with an opera-glass', watching Käthchen at the theatre, while Herr Ryden stands behind her chair in a languishing attitude. It is only in the playfully affectionate letters written to Käthchen after his return to Frankfort that Goethe begins to show his real quality.

Continuing his studies in Strassburg, he loses his heart, more seriously this time, to Friederike, the country minister's daughter, and the letters to Salzmann from Sesenheim give us a direct impression of the romance that was to be written up in his old age in *Poetry and Truth*, and that inspired at the time his first truly characteristic poems. Their inimitable simplicity and directness is due in part to the new conception of poetry that he owed to Herder, and that made him take down folk songs from the lips of old peasant

women on his country rides. The letters written to Herder from Frankfort on Goethe's return make his debt to him clear and throw light on the plans that really occupied his mind while he was ostensibly learning his business as an advocate, under his father's eye. The enthusiasm for Shakespeare that he also owed to Herder led to his dramatising in a few weeks the autobiography of a German robber-knight in his *Götz von Berlichingen*, the first work that made his name known in the whole of Germany, when it appeared in 1773.

During a summer spent in Wetzlar for further legal training in the preceding year he had been so much attracted by Charlotte Buff, already engaged to Johann Christian Kestner, that he had had to tear himself away, and when he heard soon afterwards of the suicide of another of their circle, Jerusalem, through unhappy love, he had all the elements his imagination needed as a basis for *The Sorrows of Werther*, the superb portrait of a man of feeling that brought him European fame when it was published in 1774. The actual letters he wrote to the Kestners (they were married in the spring following Goethe's visit and Goethe bought their wedding rings for them in Frankfort) have come down to us and help us to distinguish the real Goethe, who was by no means at the mercy of his feelings, from the figure he imagined to relieve the tensions within him. 'I could not wish to have spent my days in Wetzlar better,' he wrote (25th September 1772) 'and yet, may the Gods never give me such days again! They know all about punishment, and Tantalus.' A particular gem among these warm, impulsive, yet sensible and wonderfully evocative letters is that of Christmas Day, 1772.

None of the letters to the next heroine in what J. S. Blackie called 'the rich story of Goethe's loves', Lili Schönemann, the sixteen-year-old banker's daughter with whom Goethe was rushed into an engagement and out again in 1775, both, it seems, chiefly by intriguing friends, have been published, but his splendid poems tell their own story, of the prisoner of love. To Soret in 1830 he said that he had never been so near to happiness, and from other references too, from the letter of 14th December 1807, for instance, he seems to have regretted that he had not made a greater effort to overcome the social and religious difficulties that prevented the marriage. How different the course of German literature might have been if they had gone off to America together, as they once thought of doing! We have, instead of letters to Lili, those written

about this time to the sister of the Stolbergs, the two young noblemen with literary interests who visited the author of *Werther* in 1775 and went with him and another to Switzerland. Goethe never met Countess Auguste, who had first written to him anonymously through her brothers, but for a year or two, in the uninhibited manner of 'Storm and Stress', he poured out his heart to an unknown feminine confidante in a series of letters about his everyday life of the moment that convey a more immediate impression than any others at that time—except perhaps some to the young aunt of the Jacobi brothers, Johanna Fahlmer—of the brilliant and restless young poet, who with his preternatural sensibility and vivacity was soon to take Weimar by storm.

According to *Poetry and Truth*, when Goethe accepted the invitation of the young Duke Carl August to visit him in Weimar, his heart was still with Lili, but his reason persuaded him to run away again, as he had done to Switzerland a few months earlier, without being able to forget her. In Weimar he took root, at a small court where the novelist Wieland had, a few years before this, attracted the widowed Anna Amalia's attention and been appointed tutor to her elder son. A Prussian officer with literary leanings, Knebel, had soon followed him as tutor to the younger son. But for these two, it is unlikely that it would ever have occurred to the Duke, when he came of age at eighteen, to ask a young Storm and Stress genius to brighten up a rather staid court circle. The close friendship with the poet which resulted, leading to Goethe's being persuaded to stay on indefinitely and help in various ways in the government of the small state, is reflected in the correspondence between Goethe and Carl August. We see Goethe reporting on his practical activities and giving frank advice on matters of internal and external policy, at first quite informally, but from the early 'eighties, when he had become a Privy Councillor, an Excellency, and been raised to the nobility, with the most punctilious observance of etiquette, whereas the Duke writes to him from first to last as to a brother, and calls him 'Du'. It is clear from Goethe's official correspondence in the years before his Italian journey that he worked hard to restore order in the various departments with which he was concerned, and his private letters show that though he could seldom settle down to more serious writing than what was expected of him as a sort of *maitre des plaisirs*, he felt that the intimate knowledge he was able to gain of life in all stations of society in this little corner of Germany was a valuable

acquisition for a writer. As the years passed, it is true, he lost the high hopes he had once had of effecting great reforms, and he could not in the end suppress a sense of frustration when he saw how little permanent effect his work was likely to have. It led however directly to the scientific interests that soon became as important to him as his writing (see for instance the letter to Herder about his discovery of the intermaxillary bone in man, 27th March 1784), and the prolonged contemplation of human life and work in its natural setting made him more and more of a realist, convinced that 'there was far more inventive genius in nature than in himself'.

Practical work and the study of natural history were a discipline for the 'chameleon' Goethe, and welcomed as such, but the severest discipline of all was exercised by Charlotte von Stein, the Lida of the poem 'Between two worlds', where Goethe writes, linking Charlotte with Shakespeare:

Live for one, one woman only,
Honour one, one master only,—
Soul and sense are unified.
Lida! Joy of joys beside me!
William! Star of stars beyond me!
Unto you I owe my all.

(Translation by Stawell and Dickinson)

The dramas *Iphigenie* and *Torquato Tasso* and many lyrical poems show Frau von Stein's influence unmistakably, but the hundreds of letters and short notes Goethe wrote to her (nearly 1800 have been preserved, but hardly any of her answers) are of course *the* monument to this most celebrated of his loves. From the time of their publication to this day these letters have puzzled and fascinated students of Goethe. Such utter devotion and tender solicitude, finding expression, when both are in Weimar, in daily enquiries about Charlotte's health, praise of her perfection, protestations of love and discussion of their common interests and plans, are hard to match, and there is perhaps no other instance so well documented, thanks to Charlotte's treasuring every scrap of Goethe's writing. Yet it was a love apparently unsatisfied in the physical sense during these ten long years before Goethe's Italian journey; that is in fact one essential feature of this prolonged courtship, and one of the reasons for Goethe's unannounced flight at last in 1786. 'The chief aim of my journey', he tells the Duke just before his return (letter of 25th January 1788), 'was to cure myself of the afflictions of mind and body that plagued me in Germany and finally made

me of no use to anyone; the other was to satisfy my thirst for true art. I have succeeded fairly well in the first and completely in the second.'

What made such a relationship possible was in the first place, undoubtedly, a 'marriage of true minds', an instinctive mutual attraction that no one can pretend to explain. Charlotte was intelligent but not beautiful, she had been married at twenty-one to an amiable but commonplace nobleman, Master of the Horse at the Court, who could not share her intellectual interests. He seems to have been on the best of terms with Goethe, was often the bearer of his letters and was glad when his ten-year-old son went to live with Goethe in 1783, to be educated by him. Charlotte was not of an ardent temperament, she was thirty-three when Goethe first knew her, the mother of seven children of whom four had died, a woman who with all her social charm was the soul of correctness. As the daughter of the Lord Chamberlain of the Court and a mother of Scottish descent (an Irving of Drum) with pietistic leanings, she had been brought up in an atmosphere of courtly refinement and personal religion. She was herself a lady-in-waiting for five years before her marriage. In the sentimental age, as is well known from the novels of Richardson, Rousseau and all their imitators, there was a strong tendency to put women on a pedestal, to think of them as providentially destined to educate men away from sensual desire to considerate tenderness. In marriage, the natural and social basis was subordinated by the novelists to the ideals of friendship and intellectual companionship. All this too is part of the background to Frau von Stein's friendship with Goethe. Its motto was, as has been well said, Julie's question in *La nouvelle Héloïse*, '*Homme sensuel, ne sauras-tu jamais aimer?*'. It was Charlotte's avowed ambition to turn Goethe into her 'saint', and the Goethe whose Werther had made a religion out of love was prepared as few others could have been to accept this rôle, to believe in this incarnation of all that he valued, as an act of 'the worship the heart lifts above and the heavens reject not'.

Behind this attitude of a man to a woman there is no doubt the long tradition of romantic love, going back through Rousseau and Petrarch to the 'Allegory of Love' of the Middle Ages, the poetical idealisation of an instinctive relationship, that has gradually transformed it for civilised people. Some connection with religion there had always been, but in the particular phase of this long history illustrated by Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein the personal

relationship is more clearly than ever suffused by religious emotion, one no longer absorbed by inherited religious beliefs and rites, only recently and unwillingly abandoned. Like Werther, this lover prays to 'a father he does not know', but he still prays, or meditates on his personal ideals and dedicates himself to their service. Here again Goethe's letters together with his diary are a more direct revelation of his inner life than any of his poetical works, notably the series to Lavater and F. H. Jacobi, culminating in the 'Pyramid' letter to Lavater of 20th September 1780, where 'the talisman of that beautiful love with which Mme Stein gives savour to my life' is openly spoken of, to a protestant clergyman, as a moral inspiration, a guide to higher 'Bildung'.

This 'self-perfectionism', as the Russian liberals who later took it over called it so expressively, is too selfconscious and too self-absorbed to be altogether satisfying to most of us to-day. We can understand how, at Münster under religious influences, Princess Gallitzin gradually came to see in her interminable reflections and resolutions, in her 'rage de perfectionnement', nothing but vanity, pride, pharisaism, when she contrasted it with the ideal of saintliness, of humble submission of oneself to the will of Providence, such as she found in some of her catholic friends and even in the fantastic, slovenly Hamann. We can understand how Belinsky, when, after being in love with German ideas of 'Bildung', he looked at the misery around him in Russia, came to find something maddening in Goethe's serenity, and to demand of the writer that he should be 'committed'. But Goethe was not cut out for a saint, far less so than Schiller, as he later realised, and before condemning his passion for personal culture as selfish we should remind ourselves of the social and political situation of the intelligentsia in eighteenth-century Germany, their conviction of their powerlessness to remove the evils of their society and their tendency to look within for a final refuge, to seek a new kind of salvation, or 'narcotic', as Nietzsche was to say, in scholarship and art. We should note too that Goethe was exceptionably sensitive to the sufferings of the common people and anxious to help them by his official work (cf. letter of 6th March 1779 and many others to Frau von Stein, and many letters to the Duke, e.g. 26th December 1784), and that he was generous with money and advice to those in need (cf. letters to Krafft here). From the first, we are told, the memoranda he wrote as a member of the Duke's Privy Council were distinguished from those of his professional colleagues by being founded not on

law, of which he had little knowledge, but on common sense and humanity. What principally distinguishes man from other creatures, he says in the poem *The Divine*, is that he can be noble, helpful and kind. He is conscious and can choose, and that imposes upon the poet, who is human consciousness at its most acute, the growing point of humanity, the endless task of learning to know men and things as they really are, and clarifying his feelings about them to complete honesty. As 'the mist that veiled the world' gradually cleared for Goethe in the early Weimar years, he became increasingly aware of a maladjustment in his life that made a complete break necessary.

The universality of Goethe's interest in the outside world is nowhere more evident than in the letters he wrote home from Italy, and published in a revised form in his old age as the *Travels in Italy*. In the first letter to Charlotte (3rd-5th September 1786) the weather and cloud formation, the changing physical features of the country, its rocks and soil and what man has made of them, the changes in trees and plants as the traveller moves south and crosses the Alps, all attract Goethe's attention, as well as the Regensburg Jesuit college and the play performed there, or the art collections of Munich. It is sometimes a little overwhelming, but if we can overcome our self-protective tendency to laugh at such Baedeker-like thoroughness, we must admit, with Valéry, that in comparison with such a glutton for experience, we feel ourselves only half alive. During an absence from Weimar of nearly two years Goethe had time to increase and systematise his knowledge of botany, to make a thorough but highly selective study of Italian art treasures, to discover, after drawing and painting lessons with German artists and some thousand attempts of his own, that his real talent lay in the use of words, and to revise for a collected edition several of his early works. Above all, he had time to collect his thoughts after eleven years of a life full of distractions.

Goethe at thirty-nine, when he came back from Italy, was fully mature in his views of both life and art. This journey is rightly regarded as the great turning-point in his life, though the changes in him had been gradual. He was relieved now at his own request of detailed administrative duties in Weimar, but he remained the Duke's friend and counsellor, more and more a kind of elder statesman, and he undertook duties which were no sinecure as a sort of minister of culture, exercising general supervision over the artistic and scientific institutions of the state. References to

many of these activities are to be found in Goethe's private correspondence, particularly to his management of the Court Theatre (for twenty-six years from 1791) and to a number of institutes, some of them started by him, in the University of Jena, which was in Weimar territory and principally supervised by Weimar, though two or three other Saxon duchies had a nominal share in its control. The Botanical Institute, the Museum, the Observatory, the Veterinary School and the University Library all engaged Goethe's attention in varying degrees, as did also the Drawing School and Library in Weimar. When we remember how many visitors came to Weimar in the hope of meeting him, especially in his later years, we are not surprised that he had to cut down his correspondence severely, answering letters, if at all, by dictating to a secretary. That in itself goes far to explain the altered tone and style. We never find him, after Italy, pouring out the impressions of the moment page after page, as he had done to Auguste von Stolberg. There are simple personal letters to his family, but the great majority of his letters are written in answer to specific points raised by a correspondent, or to deal with a particular piece of business. They are wrung from him. They are not the spontaneous result of a desire to confide in another, as they once had been. They still reflect however the never ceasing growth of his mind and personality, and they are the repository of much of his wisdom.

The series of letters to Frau von Stein came to an abrupt end when she heard, after some months, of his liaison with Christiane Vulpius. Goethe's reply to Charlotte's protests (1st June 1789) remained unanswered. Quite naturally, she was unable to share the pagan, Latin conception of love that Goethe had formed in Italy and was soon to express magnificently in the *Roman Elegies*, where the brunette with the ringlets (Elegy IV) is clearly Christiane. More briefly, the same view is voiced in an epigram in the series *Four Seasons*:

Know you the glorious gift of love that has found its fulfilment,
Binding our bodies in beauty, setting our spirits at rest?

At the same time Goethe does justice to the earlier phase he had experienced, in his devotion to Frau von Stein:

Know you the glorious poison of love that finds no fulfilment,
Burning and bringing fresh life, devouring, renewing a man?*

* Quoted and translated by F. Melian Stawell and G. Lowes Dickinson, *Goethe and Faust*, 1928, p. 48.

Though their marriage was so long delayed, Goethe looked upon his union with Christiane as a binding one, and his many letters to her show him as an attentive and affectionate husband and father. That he should have stumbled into this situation after winning so many hearts was however in many ways unfortunate, as Goethe himself probably recognised before long. Advising a young school-master about marriage years after Christiane's death, he said: 'All the evils we endure, living within the law, do not make up a thousandth part of those we must contend with if we proceed outside or alongside the law, or perhaps in contravention of law and custom, feeling within us all the time the need to remain in harmony with the moral order of the world' (7th November 1821, to Schubarth).

Goethe's letters after 1788 are of interest to the student of German literature for the light they throw on his later works, on his policy in the management of the Weimar theatre, on his relations with the German Romantics and with English, French and other foreign admirers, and above all, his friendship with Schiller. They are rich throughout in general ideas, comments from his own personal point of view on topics still of general interest in literature, art, science and religion, and on the recurrent situations of normal life. In this respect they have the same kind of appeal as his reported 'conversations' with Eckermann and others, whose authenticity is not always beyond dispute, as that of the letters is. It suited his mind, as Professor Barker Fairley has pointed out, to express his thoughts unsystematically, sporadically, a characteristic which might make him less successful in accepted modes such as the novel and the philosophical treatise, but made his letters intellectually as important as the works proper. In letters too he is in conversation with another, and to understand his remarks as they were meant, it is important to know something about his correspondent. The many volumes of correspondence with particular people which were the first of his letters to be published have a unity that greatly adds to their interest.

The first of them all was the correspondence with Schiller, published by Cotta at Goethe's suggestion, after five years of preparation and negotiation, in 1828-29. These volumes show, Goethe says, 'what we two were trying to do, how we learned from each other and helped each other forward, what obstacles we found in our way, how far we were successful and why not more'. To a degree that it would be difficult or impossible to match in any

other classical literature, we see the principal works in process of growth, as the two poets send their drafts to each other, Goethe the *Roman Elegies*, *Faust, Part I* (that might well have remained a fragment but for Schiller's encouragement), *William Meister's Apprenticeship*, *Hermann and Dorothea*, besides ballads and shorter poems; Schiller his *Aesthetic Education*, *Wallenstein*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Bell* and several of the ballads. From the first year of their friendship they planned a campaign against the depraved literary taste of the German public, and the outcome was their series of satirical epigrams, the *Xenien*, produced by them in close collaboration. Equally a collaborative work was their essay on *Epic and dramatic poetry*, the result of a long discussion in their letters. Goethe felt he owed to Schiller, he wrote on 6th January 1798, his return to poetry from science, 'a second youth', and Schiller's debt was at least as great. Until the chance meeting and conversation following a public lecture in Jena, in July 1794, Goethe had been repelled by the remnants of Storm and Stress in Schiller, a phase he had outgrown, and the struggling Schiller had admired with unconcealed envy Goethe's gifts of genius and good fortune. But Goethe felt Schiller had 'summed up his existence' in the masterly analysis that opened their correspondence. He had found the understanding reader he so badly needed, for works like *Iphigenie* and *Tasso* had had a disappointing reception even from his friends. From now until Schiller's death in 1805, when Schiller had been for five years living in Weimar and helping to raise the Court Theatre to unparalleled heights, the two co-operated with a mutual understanding, consideration and respect that never failed, though a basic incompatibility of temperament prevented them from becoming really intimate friends. The outward sign of this final reserve is that they never address each other as 'Du'.

In the second great collection of correspondence, that with Zelter, we find on the other hand just that warmth of affection of one man for another as a man, not as a brain, that is lacking between Goethe and Schiller, at least in their letters, for there is much greater warmth in Goethe's references to Schiller after his death. Yet the later part of this collection must have been written with one eye on the public, for from 1825, while he was still preparing the publication of his correspondence with Schiller, Goethe was already thinking of this second collection. He found here 'a very engaging contrast between a man who likes company and enjoyment and travel and is an artist continually active among his fellow-men,

and a more or less stationary friend, given up to contemplation, sacrificing the present, dedicating himself to the future'. What they have in common is their 'constant, passionately serious activity, always in the same direction. They ask little about what people think. Each goes his own pace, whatever the rest may do.' It is an apt description of Goethe in old age, occupied with his 'testament' to posterity, the autobiographical writings, *William Meister's Travels*, the *Second Part of Faust*, but does his friend deserve to be compared with him?

Many have found it odd that Goethe should have formed this one new friendship in his later years, with a man who seems to them undistinguished in comparison with others among his correspondents, such as the Humboldt brothers, Hegel, Niebuhr and many in the world of learning, or Count Reinhard and C.F.L. Schultz among the administrators, not to speak of the many poets who had passing contacts with him. With several of those named he exchanged interesting letters and had memorable conversations, but it was only with Zelter that he used the brotherly 'Du'. Of course, it takes two to make a friendship. Apart from everything else, perhaps none of these others was as eager for Goethe's friendship as Zelter, or could spare him so much time, though Hegel, Reinhard and Schultz took at least the first step, by expressing an appreciative interest in Goethe's *Theory of Colours*. The experts, the 'guild', rejected it so unanimously that he was pathetically grateful when someone he could respect seemed ready to accept it. But that was not all. There was a genuineness, a 'Tüchtigkeit'—a toughness and resource in the battle of life, and a 'Derbheit'—a salty outspokenness in the witty Berlin manner, that profoundly appealed to Goethe in this builder's son, nine years younger than himself, who had been trained as a mason and carried on the family business until he was fifty-four, though his heart had been in music from boyhood. His activity as an amateur in the Berlin Academy of Singing founded by his teacher Fasch led to his becoming its conductor and director in 1800, at forty-two. His musicianship and energy gained wide recognition for this centre of musical activity in Berlin, which shared the building of the Academy of Art until it obtained one of its own. Zelter played a part in the revival of interest in J. S. Bach and Händel through regularly performing their choral works, and Felix Mendelssohn was his most distinguished pupil, whom he introduced as a boy to Goethe. He had long admired Goethe's writings before some of his settings of songs

and ballads of Goethe reached the poet through the wife of his Berlin publisher Unger in 1796, for as Goethe says admiringly of him, he was no less eager to cultivate his mind and heart than to advance musically, believing the two aims to be inseparable.

Goethe liked Zelter's compositions from the first, and he was estranged now from Reichardt, whose settings he had previously liked best. The correspondence began in 1799, Zelter visited him in 1802 and from then on each wrote a score or so of letters to the other a year, while occasional visits of Zelter, one or two holidays spent together and frequent exchanges of gifts, books and prints from Goethe, music and delicacies for the table from Zelter, helped to keep the friendship warm. It was in 1812 that Goethe, moved by Zelter's suffering at the death by suicide of his stepson, wrote to him as 'Du', and from then they were as brothers. From Zelter Goethe learned much about music, being infected in particular by his enthusiasm for Bach. He kept a copy of the *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*, for his friend, the organist at Berka, to play to him on his visits, and it is of his playing of Bach that the 'unmusical' Goethe writes to Zelter: 'I tried to put it into words. It was as if the eternal harmony was in conversation with itself, as we may imagine it to have been in the heart of God before the creation of the world. So the music moved too within me, and I felt as if I had neither ears, nor, least of all, eyes, nor any other senses—and had no need of them' (17th July 1827). Goethe read with particular pleasure the long letters Zelter wrote him on his travels, from Vienna, Herrnhut, Munich or wherever it might be. 'Send me the sheets as they dry', he urged him, and he could not hear enough in his Weimar retreat about the new plays and the music and interesting people in Berlin. Boisseree and others kept him similarly in touch with other big towns. In return he wrote about his work, giving invaluable sidelights on the *Elective Affinities*, *Faust*, *Part II* and so on, and any occasion might touch off profound reflections on human life, its uncertainties and its opportunities, with the constant refrain: 'To live long means to outlive many friends.' The letters of the last five years are, as Barker Fairley says, perhaps the best of all, with such high lights as: To Zelter on 19th March 1827, to Brühl on 23rd October 1828, and the last letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt on 17th March 1832, a few days before Goethe's death.

Many names familiar from the early letters will be found also among the later correspondents, and even if the reader knows little more about the people concerned than that they were old

friends of Goethe's, it is of great human interest to observe how temperamental affinities and differences reveal themselves under the test of the years. Herder, for instance, had been perhaps the most important influence on Goethe's youth. Through Goethe he was attracted to Weimar, and in the eighties each continued to give the other the greatest intellectual stimulus, but from Goethe's return from Italy till Herder's death in 1803 there were often difficulties in their relationship. That with F. H. Jacobi had never been so close, and with the years a wide gap opened up, in their views of religion in particular. Knebel, on the other hand, less gifted than these two, was a stauncher friend and temperamentally more closely akin to Goethe. Lotte and her husband, J. C. Kestner, and Lili Schöнемann (Elisabeth von Türckheim) continued to be on the best of terms with Goethe, though many years elapsed between letters. Goethe knew and befriended their children, and at the height of his classicism wrote the charmingly intimate letter to J. C. Kestner (16th July 1798) in which he enclosed, for purposes of comparison, a piece of string that would just go round his waist. It was in 1816 that the widowed Lotte visited Weimar, where she had a married sister, and saw again, after forty-four years, the author of *Werther*, a situation which has been presented with great subtlety by Thomas Mann in his *Lotte in Weimar*. Auguste, now Gräfin Bernstorff, writing a little later, after a break of forty years, out of concern for her old friend's eternal salvation, received in reply the fine letter of 17th April 1823. The not infrequent letters exchanged again with Frau von Stein between 1803 and 1826 are in terms of warm friendship, for which Goethe movingly expresses his gratitude in his last letter, of 29th August 1826. The contents and the tone of these letters from Goethe to the women among his older friends, read along with those, for instance, to Marianne von Willemer and her husband, or Ulrike von Levetzow and her mother (the letters published by Bettina von Arnim in *Goethe's correspondence with a child* are not to be relied on as documents), are enough to dispose of the suggestion that Goethe was a heartless philanderer. He seems rather to have been one of those persons spoken of by William James, who, if they cannot be in love with everyone at once, do certainly possess 'an enormous capacity for friendship and for taking delight in other people's lives'. Goethe's poetry will help to convince all who know it that 'such persons know more of truth than if their hearts were not so big'. Love, so understood, and insight, 'Idee und Liebe', these are for Goethe the supreme human

gifts, and even old age does not deprive us of them, he maintains, in the poem in the *West-eastern Divan* beginning:

‘The years’, thou sayest, ‘take so much away’

and ending:

Remains one special thing I know not of?
Enough remains! Illumined thought and love
(*Edward Dowden’s translation*)

It is extremely difficult to do justice in English translation to the variety of styles we find in Goethe’s letters, from the unbuttoned ease and jocular volubility of the Leipzig letters, through the still conversational but not unpremeditated naturalness of the letters written in Strassburg and Frankfort, and in the early years in Weimar, to the less colourful, more conventional but still highly individual style of the late letters, with their often involved syntax and their occasional use of terms only understandable from Goethe’s scientific writings. To convey the sense of time and place a cultivated reader has from the German, with its slightly old-fashioned turns, polite formulas and odd dialect expressions, is almost impossible. But in the present edition the translators seem to me to have wrestled with these difficulties with notable success. In making a one-volume selection from the fifty volumes of the Weimar edition of the letters, the principle they have followed is to choose the letters that bring the reader most directly into contact with this most universal of modern poets in his personal and intellectual life and that best suggest the everchanging background in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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LETTERS FROM GOETHE

1749-1772

Hätte Gott mich anders gewollt,
So hätt' Er mich anders gebaut.
Da Er mir aber Talent gezollt,
Hat Er mir viel vertraut.
Ich brauch es zur Rechten und Linken,
Weiss nicht was daraus kommt.
Wenn's nicht mehr frommt,
Wird Er schon winken.

Zahme Xenien, 585

Had God wished me to be different, He would have made
me different. But in granting me talent, He entrusted
much to me. I make use of it right and left and do not
know what will come of it. When it is no longer of use,
He will beckon me.

Tame Xenions, 585

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE was born at Frankfort on Main on 28th August 1749. Frankfort was at that time a rich commercial centre which, though it had lost part of its trade to Leipzig, was, with its 50,000 inhabitants, still the second or third largest of the sovereign 'Free-Towns' of the German Empire. It had a special dignity, as the 'Roemer' or town-hall provided the scene for the coronation of the Emperor, and its old patrician families, in whose hands lay the government of the free-town, thought themselves hardly inferior to any nobleman. Goethe belonged through his mother to one of these families and during his childhood his grandfather, Johann Wolfgang Textor, was 'Schultheiss', Frankfort's chief magistrate. His father's family, however, had grown rich only in the previous generation and, though Johann Caspar Goethe had studied Law and was certainly an able and cultured man, he was refused the civic post he had hoped to obtain and succeeded only in gaining the title 'Kaiserlicher Rat' (Imperial Councillor). He retired disappointed into private life and spent several years in travel; the longest of his journeys took him to Italy. Afterwards he devoted himself to various studies, supported local artists of whose pictures he formed a considerable collection, and spent much care on re-building and re-decorating his large house. He was a serious man of nearly forty when he married Catherina Elisabeth Textor, a lively and gay girl of seventeen. Their two eldest children were the poet, born when his mother was eighteen, and his sister Cornelia, one year younger. Several children, born later, died in infancy.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe was brought up almost entirely at home under the careful direction of his father. He had a happy childhood, as, though the father was stern and exacting as a teacher, the son was eager to learn and to work. His young mother's charm and sunny nature, combined with her deep religious feeling, resolved any difficulty in the life of the family and made her the best friend of her children, especially of her son, who loved and respected her all through her life.

In 1759 the peaceful existence of the family was disturbed by political events. The Seven Years War brought French armies in support of the Empress Maria Theresia to Frankfort and a high military official was billeted with Rat Goethe. As the latter was an admirer of Frederick II of Prussia, the discomfort of having strangers in the house was aggravated by the fact that they belonged to the enemy's camp. His ten year old son, however, enjoyed having the cultured foreigner in the quiet house.

Six years later, when peace had been restored to the Empire, the coronation of Joseph II brought fresh excitement to Frankfort, and among

the most indefatigable spectators was young Goethe, who as the Schultheiss' grandson had easy access everywhere, having prepared himself for this event by studying with his father the history of the coronation rites.

Soon afterwards, in the autumn of 1765, the sixteen year old Goethe was sent to Leipzig to study Law. Leipzig, then called Little Paris, was not only a most important trading centre, but also an almost cosmopolitan town. The University counted among its members Gellert, now known mainly for his *Fables*. He was then thought a great poet as well as an unfailing critical judge of literature. The College of Art had in A. F. Oeser a most capable and inspiring director. It is therefore not surprising that Goethe's interests did not remain confined to the study of Law, especially as he soon discovered he had already learned from his father much of what was required by the University, and that he preferred attending courses on Poetry and on Art, trying his hand at both. An operetta, *Die Laune des Verliebten*, and a comedy, *Die Mitschuldigen*, date at least partly from this time, as do a collection of *Lieder*, written in the conventional baroque style. Friendships with fellow students (Behrisch, Horn and Schlosser, who later became his brother-in-law) took up much of his time, as also did a rather one-sided love affair with the daughter of a Leipzig wine merchant, Käthchen Schönkopf, called Annette. He spent many a happy hour with the Schönkopf family and also used to meet Annette in the houses of their mutual friends, among others in those of the publisher Breitkopf and of the Obermanns; he acted with her in an amateur performance of Lessing's comedy *Minna von Barnhelm*. Yet Goethe found time too to write long letters to his friends and to his sister Cornelia, who from his childhood had been his best friend; the letters he wrote to her from Leipzig are among the earliest preserved.

Gradually, however, the strain of all this became too much for him; he fell seriously ill and had to return home in August 1768, to be nursed by his mother and sister until in April 1770 he was able to go to Strassburg University to continue his studies.

Strassburg was very different from Frankfort and Leipzig, the two towns Goethe had so far known. Its Gothic minster dominated a small, quiet University city set in lovely surroundings. Neither politics nor trade ruffled the peaceful life of the town during Goethe's stay there, except once for a brief space when Marie Antoinette, the fourteen year old Austrian archduchess, passed through on her way to Paris to become the wife of the Dauphin. The University, unlike that of Leipzig, was not a centre of the Arts and therefore provided no distraction from the study of Law to which Gellert's teaching had tempted Goethe in Leipzig. He now took his legal studies up more seriously and obtained the Licentiate of Law in August 1771. However Law proved no all-absorbing interest to him. The companions with whom he used to dine were

mostly medical students and Goethe soon became interested in medicine and anatomy and still more so in chemistry, laying the foundation for those scientific studies which from then on occupied him increasingly all through his life.

He made various friends among his fellow students and with them explored on foot and on horse the beautiful Rhineland. Another friend was Salzmann, a notary, a middle-aged man, who presided at the students' table. For a short time Goethe joined the Pietist Community of the Moravian Brothers in Strassburg, as he had been attracted to their way of life by his admiration for Susanne Klettenberg, a friend of his mother, who was later on to be the prototype for the 'Schöne Seele' in his novel *Wilhelm Meister*. However the most important friendship he formed in Strassburg was that with Herder.

Johann Gottfried Herder, a few years Goethe's senior, was already an ordained pastor, and had become widely known as a literary critic. He was then making a collection of folk-songs from various countries. He soon imparted his enthusiasm for Gothic art, folk-lore, Ossian and Shakespeare to his younger friend. Their meeting was of the greatest importance for Goethe as a poet, especially as it came at the same time as his love for Friederike, the daughter of pastor Brion, of Sesenheim, a small village near Strassburg. He was deeply in love for the first time and his genius as a poet was stimulated first by his love and then by the lasting remorse he felt when he left the desperate young girl in order to return to Frankfort.

The Lieder he wrote at that time, like *Mailed*, *Willkommen und Abschied*, *Wanderers Sturmlied*, completely broke with the conventional formalism of his earlier lyrics, and marked with the essay *Von Deutscher Baukunst* (1771) and the tragedy *Götz von Berlichingen* (in its first form started in the autumn of the same year) the beginning of the Storm and Stress epoch of German literature.

In August 1771 Goethe returned to Frankfort to take up a lawyer's practice. This however did not prevent him from writing *Von Deutscher Baukunst*, *Götz* and many poems, starting two more tragedies, *Socrates* and *Caesar*, and the earliest scenes of *Faust*.

1 To CORNELIA GOETHE

Leipzig,
12th October 1765.

My dear little sister, it would be unfair not to think of you, *id est* if I stopped writing to you it would be the greatest injustice committed by any student since Adam's children went to the University.

'What would the King of Holland say if he saw me like this?' exclaimed Herr von Bramarbas in Holberg's play. And I feel almost like exclaiming 'What would you say, sister, if you could see me in my room here?' You would call out *astonished* 'How tidy, brother, how tidy!' Now open your eyes and look! Here is my bed. There are my books, and over there a table, prettier than your dressing-table can ever be. And then—but that is something else. I have just remembered. Little girls like you can't see as far as we poets do. So you must believe me on my word as a poet that it all looks beautifully neat here. Enough of that. Here is a fairing for you.—'Thanks very much.'—'Your humble servant; don't mention it.'—A kiss from me for both the Schmiedel and Runckel girls, the little dears! Give my best compliments to the three Stockums and to Fräulein Rincklef too. Is Mlle Brevillier speaking to you again? That's enough about girls. Just one more thing. Here, thank heaven, I have the honour not to know any; *cane pejus et angue turpius*, says Horace. With young and pretty - - - but what has that to do with you? Stop, stop, stop! Enough of girls.

Here is a mad story for you. Ha, ha, ha! do laugh! Herr Claus gave me a letter for a merchant here. I went to deliver it. Found the man and all his household very proper—in black and white. The women, squinting sideways, with little caps on, covering all their hair. My dear, I almost burst! A few words, spoken in a sweet, humble silence, finished me. I left the temple. Farewell.

2 To CORNELIA GOETHE

Leipzig,
6th December 1765.

La veille du jour de ta naissance

My dear, I want to chat with you, and wanting that, makes me write. Be proud, sister, that I am giving you some of the time I need so badly. What a great honour for you! Curtsy low, still lower, I like you to have good manners; lower still! That's it. Your servant. Does it make you laugh, Little Silly, when I hold

forth like that? Laugh then. We scholars have no respect—don't think we have no respect for 10 Rhein-thaler. No! It is you girls we respect as little as a Monad. Really, since I have learnt that one can separate a mote in a sunbeam into a thousand particles—since that, I say, I am ashamed I ever tried to please a girl who probably does not know that creatures exist who can dance a minuet on the point of a needle. *Transeat*. But I will show you how fraternally I treat you; I will answer your ridiculous letters. Your little circle is quite a nice one; my greetings to the dear girls. Bother! I am contradicting myself already. You see, sister dear, I am not in earnest about the Monads. Greetings to Herr Bissmann and Herr Thym. Tell Auntie I am hoping for a letter from her. You are silly with your 'Grandison'. I can't find what Matty H. said. But I tell you I shan't let you read any novels but the ones I choose. But don't worry; 'Grandison', 'Clarissa' and 'Pamela' will probably be exceptions; you shall have some things you enjoy reading. I will write to father about it. What is all this about writing neatly? You can thank heaven you see one single letter in my writing. You have nothing to do, you can sit down and pen a letter, but I have to do everything in a hurry. You want me to describe my circle at dinner. I shall make a start, but I shall probably not finish. Our host is Dr Ludwig, a miserable life, fifty years and all his work have not robbed him of any of the cheerfulness of his twenties. His manners are free, he chatters a dreadful lot about girls, and he is an extremely sociable and kindly man. He likes company and rented a fairly large house where he lodges a number of university people and smaller fry. And that is why he keeps this table, too. Morus, a theologian . . . The rest of the company another time . . .

You have time, so write often, everything of note that is going on in town.

Answer to your letter of 21st November.

What do you want me to teach you? Do you want to know that falling bodies quicken their pace at different rates? Or that the square root of 16 is 4? What use would these things be to you? I will teach you something better. Look, sister, how we will manage it. Write your letters with a wide margin, and I will write the answers and criticisms alongside. But don't get father to help you, it would not be any good then. I want to see how you yourself write. I am going to make a beginning to-day. And above all, write as you would speak, and you will write a good letter . . .

. . . It is your birthday to-day, I ought to send you a greeting in verse. But I have no more time and no more room. Grow wiser as you grow older. Farewell.

3 To CORNELIA GOETHE

*Leipzig,
11th May 1767.*

. . . Let us talk of my poems now, that is more cheerful. I am pleased you like them, but had expected you to write more exactly what you liked most and what you disliked; just making fun of my learning was all wrong, for I must confess I'd rather be guided by a girl than by a critic. This is the place to give you all the reasons why I couldn't show Gellert anything . . .

I am not at all conceited, so I can trust my own convictions that I have some of the qualities essential for a poet, and that I could become one if I worked hard. I began to write verses before I was ten and thought them good; now at seventeen I realise they are bad, but after all I am seven years older, so I make them seven years better. If anyone had told me in '62 what I now tell myself about my 'Joseph' I should have been so dejected, I would never have put pen to paper again.

When I read Clodius' sharp criticism of my poem* a year ago, I quite lost heart, and it was six months before I recovered and was able to write a few songs the girls asked for. I have written at most fifteen poems since November, none of them particularly long or important; and there isn't one of them I can show Gellert, for I know what he thinks about poetry at the moment. They should let me go my own way; if I have a real gift, I shall be a poet, even if nobody corrects me, and if I have not, no criticism will do me any good. When I show a poem to my friend Behrisch, who knows Gellert well, he often says I should show it to Gellert and he would be certain to praise it highly. I don't know if that is reason enough to excuse me from showing him anything; but if I must, I will send him something indirectly and he can criticise it in front of everybody. I'll listen to what he says and tell you everything.

[Continued in English]

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

'Love is a smoke raised with the fume of sighs,
Being purged, a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes,

* On the wedding of Goethe's uncle Textor.

Being vex'd, a sea nourish'd with lovers' tears;
What is it else, a madness most discreet,
A choaking gall, and a preserving sweet.'

I'm astonish'd on the history of Miss Aunt Textor. I cannot say what I think thereof, for I can scarce think anything. Would God that that Marriage, form'd by Love alone be happier than the other form'd only by interest. I cannot hope the new married shall be happy, and that by reasons I am now unable to explain, by reasons who seldom betray me. I pity the good old grandfather, it must be the greatest misery to a wise man, to be forced to consent in the follies of youth. I fear our family has been tourbed, by that adventure by dividing herself in parties as it must happen in like an occasion. O how I hate that manner of division.

[Continued in German]

You want to hear something of my tragedies. Well, so far I have only thought out the plots, because I don't yet feel I can work them out. My 'Belshazzar' is finished, but it is the same with it as with all these giant works I attempt, feeble pygmy that I am. There is a good deal that is tragic in the plot of 'Pharaoh's Successor'; its subject is the slaying of the first-born in Egypt by the Angel. I would send it to you if it were well enough written for you to make it out or for Horn to copy it. But here are a few other things of mine I should like some people to know. You can show them to close friends, but don't let anybody make a copy. The 'Elegy' is on the death of Behrisch's brother who was an official near Hesse-Philippsthal. The plot of 'Mycon' is good, but it might be carried out better.

Mais ma soeur, ne croirait on pas en lisant mes vers qu'il me falut être bien amoureux, du moins il y règne beaucoup de tendresse. Vraiment, j'aime les filles toutes ensembles . . .

Fais lire les vers suivants à ma mère.*

4 To E. W. BEHRISCH

Leipzig,
Tuesday, 10th November 1767.

It was good to hear from you to-day. See, I am writing back at once, though you won't get this till Saturday.

7 p.m. You are not here with me, and compared to your open arms, paper is a chilly refuge indeed . . . To hell with love,

* This is a poem called *An meine Mutter*.

Behrisch. Ah, if you could see me, poor raving wretch, not knowing who to rave at; you would be sorry for me. Friend, friend, why have I only one friend?

8 *p.m.* My blood is flowing more gently now; I shall be able to talk to you more calmly . . . Horn has been here. I had sent for him to read to me; I sent him away, he thinks I am in bed. *He* mustn't butt in when I am talking to *you*. He is a good lad, but when it comes to butting in, he is a past master at it.—Thousands of things, but not the right one.—O Behrisch, Behrisch! My head! . . .

Listen, listen, I will tell you the things that have happened one after another.

After dinner on Sunday I went to Dr Herrmann's and came back to the Schönpkopf's about three. *She** had gone to the Obermann's; for the first time in my life I wished myself there, but I could not think of any excuse, so I decided to go and see the Breitkopfs. I got there, but I could not settle down. Within a quarter of an hour I was asking the young lady if she hadn't any message for the Obermann's to do with 'Minna'? She said no. I persisted. She told me I might as well stay, but I wanted to go. At last my insistence annoyed her and she wrote a note to Mlle Obermann and gave it to me and I dashed across there. I thought I was going to be so happy! But bother her, she had spoiled that pleasure for me. I got there. Mlle Obermann opened the note; it said: 'What odd creatures men are—changeable without knowing why. Goethe has barely arrived, and now he is giving me to understand that your society would be more agreeable to him than mine. He is forcing me to give him some message to take, even though there is none. Angry as I am with him, I am at least grateful that he gives me the opportunity to tell you that I am yours truly.'

Mlle Obermann read the letter and assured me she could make nothing of it. My Annette read it too, and instead of rewarding me for coming and thanking me for my tender affection, she spoke to me with such coldness that both Mlle Obermann and her brother noticed it. She kept this up the whole evening and the whole of Monday, and her attitude so infuriated me that on Monday evening I fell into a fever that racked me horribly in the night with hot and cold fits, and has made me stay indoors the whole day.—Now Behrisch, don't expect me to tell you all this in cold blood. Good God! This evening I sent downstairs to the Schönpkopf's for some-

* Käthchen-Annette Schönpkopf, with whom Goethe was in love.

thing. The maid came back with the news that she had gone to the theatre with her mother. At that moment I was shivering with fever, but my blood boiled at this news. What? At the theatre! While she knew her lover was ill. Good God! It was dreadful. But I forgave her. I didn't know what play was on. What? Has she gone with them to the theatre? With these creatures? I was shaken! I had to find out. I got dressed and rushed like a madman to the theatre. I took a gallery ticket. Ha! A fresh blow! My eyes were weak and I could not see as far as the boxes. I thought I should go mad and thought of running home to fetch my opera-glasses. A common fellow standing beside me saved me in my bewilderment; I saw he had two pairs. I asked him politely to lend me one and he did so. I looked down and found her box.—O Behrisch!

I found her box. She was sitting in the corner, next to her was some little girl, God knows who, then her brother Peter, then her mother. But listen! Behind her chair Herr Ryden in a most tender attitude. He! Imagine me! Imagine me! in the gallery! with opera-glasses—seeing that! Damnation! Ah, Behrisch, I thought my head would split with rage. They were acting 'Miss Sara Sampson'. Fräulein Schultz was taking the part of Miss Sara, but I couldn't see a thing. My eyes were on the box and my heart beat madly. Sometimes he leant forward and the little girl beside her couldn't see anything. Sometimes he took a step back, at other times he leaned over her chair and said something to her. I gnashed my teeth and watched. Tears came into my eyes, but they were from looking so hard; I have not been able to weep the whole evening. Presently I thought of you, of you, I swear I did, and was going home to write to you, but the sight held me there and I stayed on. My God! Why was I driven to find excuses for her, even at that moment? But I did, yes. I saw her treating him very coldly, turning away, hardly answering, seeming to be annoyed by him. I only imagined I saw it all. Ah, but my glasses did not flatter me as I flattered myself; I *wanted* to see it. O God, and even if I had seen it, wouldn't love of me have been the last thing I could have put it down to?

It is striking nine. That damned play will be over. Curse it! On with my story now. I sat there a quarter of an hour and saw nothing but what I had seen in the first five minutes. Suddenly the fever seized me again violently and I thought I was going to die. I gave the glasses to my neighbour and ran rather than walked

from the theatre—and I have been here a couple of hours now. If you know any creature with the same powers, the same prospects, the same advantages, more wretched than I am, tell me his name, and I will be silent. The whole evening I have been vainly trying to weep, but my teeth keep chattering and you can't gnash your teeth and weep . . .

And yet I love her. I believe I would take poison from her hand. Forgive me, my friend, I am really writing in a fever, a paroxysm. But let me write. It's better for me to vent my rage like this than to beat my head against the wall.

I have been asleep in my chair for a quarter of an hour. I really am quite exhausted. But I must finish this page to-night. I still have a great deal to say.

How shall I spend to-night? I shudder to think. What shall I do to-morrow? I know already. I shall keep calm till I get to the house. And then my heart will begin to pound and if I hear her step or her voice, it will pound harder, and after dinner I'll go away. Supposing I see her, tears will come into my eyes and I shall think: God forgive you as I do and give you all the years you take from me; that is what I'll think. I'll look at her and be happy that I can believe in a half-hearted way that she loves me, and I'll go away. That is what I shall be like to-morrow and the next day and all the other days.

You see, Behrisch, I once saw 'Miss Sara' with her. How different from to-day. It was the same scenes, the same actors even, and to-day I could not stand it. Ah! happiness lies in ourselves alone. We are our own devils, driving ourselves from our own Paradise . . .

Good-night. My brain won't work. Oh, if only the sun were there again. What discontentment! I really don't know what I am writing.

Early Wednesday. I have had a dreadful night. I dreamt about 'Miss Sara'. Oh, Berisch! I feel a bit calmer, but not much. I shall see her to-day. We are going to rehearse 'Minna' at the Obermanns and she will be there. Ah, if she should persist in her coldness to me! I could punish her. The most terrible jealousy should torment her. But no, no, I cannot do it.

About 8 p.m. How different it was yesterday about this time. I've been reading my letter through, and I should certainly have torn it up, if I had felt any shame at appearing before you as I really am. You will recognise and you will pity the young man in his violent longing, his equally violent disgust, his rage and his rapture.

The same thing that made the world hell to me yesterday makes it heaven to me to-day—and this will go on until it can no longer make it into either for me.

She was at the Obermann's and we had a quarter of an hour alone together. It didn't need any more for us to make it up. Shakespeare is wrong when he says 'Frailty thy name is woman'; he ought rather to have represented it as a young man. She saw her fault, my illness touched her, and she threw her arms round my neck and begged me to forgive her. I forgave her everything. What had I to forgive, compared to what I would have forgiven her at that moment?

I was strong enough to hide my folly at the theatre from her. 'We went to the theatre yesterday, my dear,' she said, 'you mustn't be angry at that. I tucked myself right into the corner of the box and put Lottchen next to me, all so that he shouldn't come near me. He kept standing behind my chair, but I avoided talking to him as much as I could, I chatted with my neighbour in the next box and wished I could have been in it with her.' Ah Behrisch, it is just what I told myself yesterday that I had seen and now *she* tells me the same. *She!* With her arms round my neck. *One* moment of delight makes up for thousands spent in torment, or who could want to live; my trouble was at an end, an evil that is past is a good. The remembrance of past pain is pleasure. And made up to me like that! My whole happiness held in my arms! . . .

Saturday. Annette sends her love. I think I must stop now. Two whole sheets. My goodness, what a lot of writing. I've been reading it over, and I am sure you would be amused at it if it were a stranger, but you will be sorry for your friend. True, I am an awful fool, but a dear good boy; Annette thinks so—don't you too?

5 To C. G. SCHÖNKOPF*

Frankfort,
1st October 1768.

'Your servant, Herr Schönkopf; how do you do, Madame? Good evening Mademoiselle, and good evening Peter, my boy.'

N.B. You must picture me coming in by the small door. You, Herr Schönkopf, are sitting on the sofa by the warm stove, you, Madame, are in your little nook behind the writing table, Peter has got right under the stove, and if Käthchen is sitting in my place at

* Father of Käthchen-Annette.

the window, she must just get up and make room for the visitor. Now I will start talking.

I have been away a long time, haven't I? For five whole weeks and more I have not seen you or spoken to you. That hasn't happened one single time in the last eighteen months, but alas, it will often happen in future. You would like to hear how I have been getting on. Well, I can tell you, fairly well, but only fairly well.

By the way, you have forgiven me now for not coming to say good-bye. I was near the house, I was even outside the door, I saw the lantern burning and went as far as the steps, but hadn't the heart to go up. Knowing it was the last time, how could I have come down again? So I'll do now what I ought to have done then—thank you for all the love and kindness you constantly showed me and that I shall never forget. I don't need to beg you to remember me; there are bound to be thousands of occasions when you will think of someone who for eighteen months made part of your family circle, who must often have given you cause for annoyance, but who always meant well, poor fellow, and whom, I hope, you will sometimes miss. I know I often miss you. I will say no more, for it is always a sad business with me. I had a safe tolerable journey and found all well here, except my grandfather; he has so far recovered from the stroke which crippled one side, but his speech is still affected. I feel as well as anyone who isn't quite certain whether he has consumption or not. But I am making headway; my cheeks are filling out and I'm not troubled here with worries about either girls or food, so I hope to get better and better every day . . .

6 To Fräulein KÄTHCHEN-ANNETTE SCHÖNKOPF

Frankfort,
1st June 1769.

Dear friend, I read your joy and happiness in the letter you wrote to Horn.* You can imagine what I felt and what happiness it gave me, if you can still imagine how much I love you. I send my greetings to your dear Doctor and hope to be counted among his friends. I have been long in writing; that would be remiss if you had been eagerly awaiting my letters. But I didn't

* About her engagement.

write, for I knew it was time enough for you, and that a letter from me was no more to you than the *Erlangen Journal*. So taken all in all, to you I am only just a stale fish, and I feel like assuring you—. No I won't; you might not take me seriously . . .

My songs are not published yet. Once they are, I would send you a copy, but I don't know anybody in Leipzig to ask. Spend the few pence they cost on me, and let Peter play one now and then, if you want to remember me. I was a different fellow from now when I wrote those songs. Ah, the poor boy! If you could only see what I do all day long; it's really laughable.

Writing is hard for me, especially to you; you won't get another letter till October, unless you send a special command. For my dear girl, though you call me your dear friend, and sometimes your best friend, even the best of friends can be a tiresome thing. Nobody likes beans in pickle where there are fresh ones to be had. Fish is always best fresh, but if you think it may go bad, you salt it, especially if you want to pack it off. It must be amusing to you to think of all the suitors you have pickled in friendship, big and little ones, crooked and straight ones—I have to laugh myself. But you mustn't break off the correspondence with me altogether; I'm still good enough for a fish in pickle . . .

7 To E. T. LANGER*

*Strassburg,
29th April 1770.*

Surely, my good friend, you would have as little cause as I have to complain of the world without or within, if it is as bright beyond the mountains by your lake as it is here to-day, and if in your heart there is such a feeling of spring as there is in mine. As for me, I am here, I am well and as content as one can be at rest; and I hope your health too is as good as possible again. We who are ill have the advantage that we are more impressionable, sensitive and fortunate, as it were, than those in ordinary good health.

When the body suffers, how willingly the soul stays at home, waiting and anxious; its wishes hardly go beyond one night and its one hope rests on a new prescription. And that, my dear Langer, is the same soul that plays with our body as with a puppet while the body is supple and can follow the soul. So often the soul is like a

* A Leipzig friend, now tutor to a young German in Switzerland. This letter is translated from Barker Fairley, *Goethe—Selected Letters*, Blackwell, 1949.

young girl seeking happiness at a fancy-dress ball; she, too, often brings home from the pleasures of the world a throbbing heart instead of calm, and hunger in the place of content.

How are things with you now, my good friend? Judging by your latest letter you are not happy. You are too far from the centre of your world to be at ease, and up till now it has been your fate to turn round and round like the rim of a wheel, never resting, and from start to finish never nearing the axis. You with your feeling heart! Unhappy man!

My small adventures at the moment are like raindrops on a pond, and I am as little ruffled by them as a pond is by gentle evening rain.

I have been here just three weeks and am in the midst of a good deal of bustle. Madame* is due here soon. The preparations that are being made for her here show more taste than sense; it's all very pretty, but there isn't one single idea behind it.

However, there is a certain amount I can learn from it; and I am very pleased to be here. I was most agreeably surprised when I saw the Gobelin tapestries brought from Paris, to decorate some of the state-rooms. Most of the designs are from Raphael and they alone would be worth the journey I have undertaken for many reasons. The famous 'School of Athens' is one of them; I cannot begin to write about it, but I do know I can date a new epoch in my knowledge from the moment I first saw it. There is boundless art in a thing like this. There were some modern masterpieces in the next room; what a difference; three centuries!

To Italy, Langer, to Italy! But not for at least a year. That would be too soon. I haven't got the knowledge for it yet, I still need a great deal. Paris shall be my school and Rome my University. For it's a real University; when one has seen it, one has seen everything. That's why I'm in no hurry to get there.

11th May.

Swept away and whirled about in a circle of delight and nonsense. I am only now beginning to think again that I too exist. For these last few days we have been simply adjectives of our *Dauphine*. How we betray our whole heart before this cloth-of-gold dress called Majesty, that would become any well-built man better than a hunchbacked king. And yet let us once be moved and our pride is powerless; our princes and girls know this and do what they like with us.

* Marie Antoinette.

Speaking of girls, how about your flame, Langer? Have you no fears? Or are you in the state of fearing nothing anymore? One could congratulate you on either, but I doubt if you are so fortunate.

Your friend is just about the same. Fairly well, and very seldom quarrelling with his heart, but still more seldom at one with it. That is to say, like good friends we often give in to one another without being of the same opinion.

What am I studying? In the first place the distinctions and subtleties with which one has made right and wrong look fairly alike. That is to say I am studying to be a Doctor of Laws.

And then besides, on the sly, I am trying to acquire a little literary knowledge of great works which the learned rabble partly will admire and partly ridicule, and both because they fail to understand them; fathoming their mysteries is a privilege only of the man of wisdom and feeling. My good Langer, it really is a delight to be young and to see through the deficiencies of most learned people and then to come upon such a treasure. O, it's a long line from Hermes' *Tablet* to Wieland's *Musarion*! Farewell and my greetings to the Count.

My address is: c/o Herr Schlag, Fur merchant in the *Fischmarkt*.

8 To Fräulein SUSANNE VON KLETTENBERG*

Strassburg,
26th August 1770.

Madame, to-day I joined the Christian Community in commemorating the Saviour's sufferings and death; and you can guess why I want to settle down this afternoon and write to you this long-delayed letter. Our best friends get the same treatment from us as God Himself does; love requires a collected mind, and I would rather pick up coins thrown out at a procession than stray thoughts, especially here and in my present circumstances. And yet these seem to promise a good deal. The many people I meet and the many chance things that come my way, give me experience and knowledge beyond anything I've dreamt. Besides I'm just fit enough to manage a fair amount of work that seems necessary, reminded only now and then that I am no giant either in body or mind.

I am not very intimate with the pious circles here. It seems this

* A friend of Goethe's mother.

was not to be, though I approached them eagerly at first. They are so thoroughly tedious, when they begin, that my lively spirits cannot endure it. They are all people of mediocre understanding, people whose first religious feeling was their first rational idea, and who, therefore, maintain that is all, just because *they* know nothing more. Besides they belong to the Halle persuasion and are so opposed to our Count [Zinzendorf], so churchy and so precise that—I needn't go on, to you.

There's another thing; their preference for their own feelings and opinions, their conceit in wanting everybody's nose pointing the same way as theirs—faults people like them who are full of some good cause freely indulge in . . .

My birthday is the day after to-morrow. I don't expect to begin a new epoch then, but however things go, pray with me and for me that everything may turn out as it ought.

I begin to enjoy jurisprudence greatly. Everything is like Merseburg beer; the first time it gives you the shivers, but after a week of drinking it, you can't stop.

Chemistry is still my secret passion.

I'm still the same fool as ever!

9 To Fräulein FRIEDERIKE BRION*

*Strassburg,
15th October 1770.*

My dear, dearest friend, there is no question about my having anything to say to you, but it is a different matter whether I know why I am trying to write to you just now and what I want to say. A certain restlessness I feel tells me I want to be with you, and there a scrap of paper is a real comfort, a kind of winged horse—to me in the middle of noisy Strassburg, to you in your peaceful home, when you miss your friends badly.

You can pretty well imagine us on the way back, if you saw how distressed I was at leaving, and noticed Weyland was hurrying home, glad as he would have been to stay had things been otherwise. His thoughts went forwards, mine went back. So naturally we didn't say much or anything interesting to each other.

Beyond the Wanzenau we thought we could take a short cut and managed to lose ourselves in the marshes. It grew dark and only needed the rain that poured down later to come on sooner, and we

* Pastor Brion's younger daughter, with whom Goethe fell in love.

should have had every cause to believe in the love and constancy of our princesses.

Meanwhile the scroll I kept in my hand for fear of losing it was a true talisman, spiriting away all the hardships of the journey. And now? Ah, I won't speak of it; either you can guess it or you won't believe me.

We got back at last, and our first thought—which had already cheered our way—ended in plans to see you again soon.

It's a perfectly delightful thing, this hope of seeing someone again. When our spoiled little hearts ache rather, we hurry along with the remedy, saying: 'Dear little heart, don't worry, you won't be long away from those you love; don't worry, dear little heart.' And then we give it a silhouette, just so that it has something, and it is good and quiet as a baby getting a doll from mother instead of the apple it ought not to eat.

Anyway, we are here. You were wrong, you know; you didn't believe I should dislike the bustle of the town after the sweet pleasures of the country.

Strassburg has certainly never seemed to me so empty as now. I hope things will improve once time has dimmed the memory of our delightful, merry fun a little and once I cease to feel so acutely what a good and charming friend I have in you. But am I able or willing to forget this? No, I would rather keep my little heartache and write to you often.

Many thanks once more, and sincere respects to your parents, and to your sister hundreds of—what I would like to give to you.

10 To J. D. SALZMANN*

*Strassburg,
17th May? 1771.*

It's only nine and I can't keep my eyes open. Precious order, indeed! Out revelling last night, this morning whipped out of bed by plans. O, my head looks like this room, I can't find a piece of paper, even, except this blue one. But any bit of paper will do to tell you that I love you, and this scrap twice over, for you know what it was to be used for. Live happily till I see you again. In my soul I don't feel quite at ease; I am too much awake not to know I am catching at shadows. And yet—At seven to-morrow my horse will be saddled, and then Adieu!

* A middle-aged notary in Strassburg. Written on a scrap of blue drawing paper.

11 To SALZMANN

*Sesenheim,
mid-June 1771.*

I am coming, or I am not coming or—I shall know all that when it is over, better than now. It is raining, outside and inside, and the wretched west winds are rustling in the vine-leaves by the window, and my *animula vagula** is like the weathercock on the church tower over there: ‘round, round’, so it goes all day long, though ‘bend, stretch’† has been out of fashion for a while. Full stop; as far as I know, that’s the first on this page.

Well turned periods are difficult, so are stops in the right places; girls don’t put either commas or stops, and it’s not to be wondered at if I grow like them.

But I am getting on well with my Greek; let me tell you, since I came here, I have got so much wiser in Greek, I can almost read Homer without a translation.

Besides, I am a month older; you know that means a great deal with me, not because I do much, but because I do a lot of things.

God keep my dear parents;
God keep my dear sister;
God keep my dear Notary,
And all good souls. Amen.

12 To J. G. HERDER

*Frankfort,
2nd September 1771.*

It is a joy to me to be able to give you what you want and perhaps more than you expect. You will have thought me no more capable of it than of any genuine enthusiasm, judging by the picture you must have had of me in your mind. Well, I have brought twelve songs with me from Alsace, that I have gathered from the lips of old, old women. What a stroke of luck! For their grandchildren are all singing ‘I loved Ismene alone’. I meant them for you and you alone, these songs, not even my best friends got a copy, though they begged hard. I won’t stop to praise them or say what each is worth. But I have been carrying them about, treasuring them next to my heart. Any girl that wants to find favour in my eyes will have to learn them and sing them; my sister shall write you out

* A quotation from a poem attributed to the Emperor Hadrian.

† A party-game?

the tunes (N.B. they are the old tunes, as God made them). And now quickly adieu! I'm off to copy them.

I am ready now and waiting till the post goes. I hope you will enjoy the songs. Adieu. More soon about Celtic-Gaelic things. I still need certain books, but I shall be getting them soon. A few complaints about your letter, though I ought to be very pleased with it on the whole. First one hint: make an envelope in future, some passages are more 'sealed' than the Revelation of St. John.

No more now. Your Goethe.

My sister is making me begin again. I've to send you her greetings and invite you for the 14th October, when Shakespeare's name-day is to be celebrated with great pomp. You must be present in spirit at least, and send your essay for that day if you can, so that you provide part of the liturgy.

My parents ask to be remembered to you.

13 To SALZMANN

*Frankfort,
28th November 1771.*

Though you know me so well, I am sure you can't guess why I haven't written. A passion has seized me, a quite unexpected passion, you know how that is with me; I forget sun and moon and even the stars. I cannot do without it and have to plunge headlong in whatever the cost. This time you needn't fear for the consequences; my whole genius is bent on something that makes me forget Homer, Shakespeare and everything else—I am dramatising the story of [Götz von Berlichingen], one of the noblest of Germans, rescuing the memory of a brave man. It is a real pleasure to me; and I need it, for it is dreary living here where all we do, taken together, just adds up to nothing more than itself.

Nobody has taken your place and I wander alone through the fields and on paper. True, my contemplative mind now feels capable of flights, it flagged in the varied life in Strassburg. But of course it would be a shame if I didn't throw all my strength into something, didn't try to seize it and carry it along as well as I can; and what I can't carry I'll drag. You shall have what is finished and I hope you shall enjoy it, for it is a living picture of a noble forefather (usually, alas, we know them only from their tombstones). Besides I know you will love him a little because he comes to you from me.

As you see my occupation is a very simple one, for my practice only fills some odd hours so far . . .

You can easily guess how often I have changed in these last months when you remember what a lot of paper the changes of my thoughts used to need for just one week. Frankfort is the same old nest, 'nidus' if you like. Good for hatching out birds but otherwise figuratively 'spelunca', a miserable hole. God help me out of this wretched state, Amen. . . .

14 To HERDER

Wetzlar,
10th July 1772.

Still upon the waves in my little boat, and if the stars hide themselves I toss like this in the hand of fate while in my breast alternate courage and hope and fear and peace. Since I have felt the power of the words *στηθος* and *πραπιδες*, a new world has opened out for me within myself. Poor creature in whom the head is everything! I am living now in Pindar, and if the splendour of the palace could make for happiness, it ought to be mine. When he shoots his arrows one after the other towards his goal in the clouds, of course I still stand there gaping; yet I too feel what Horace could express, what Quintilian praises, and the active part of me takes on new life as I feel nobility and recognise purpose. *Ειδως φua, ψεφηνος ανηp μυριαν αρεταν ατελει νουω γευεται, ουποτ ατρεκει κατεβα ποδι, μαθοντες* etc. These words have pierced my soul like swords. So now you know what I am like and what your letter has meant to me in my present *Philoctetic* state.

Since I last heard from you the Greeks have been my only study. At first I limited myself to Homer, then I searched for Socrates in Xenophon and Plato; this opened my eyes to my unworthiness, I came to Theocritus and Anacreon, and finally something drew me to Pindar, and there I'm still held fast. Apart from this I haven't done anything and I am still hopelessly confused with it all, and in an inspired moment I have found out why I am always pecking at this and that. It was Pindar's words *επικρατειν δυνασθαι* that opened my eyes. When you stand in a chariot, full of courage, and your four unbroken horses rear up in wild disorder against your reins, when you control their strength, force back with your whip the horse that pulls to one side, force down the horse that rears up, driving them on again till all sixteen legs fall in step

and carry you to the goal, that is mastery, *επικρατειν*, virtuosity.

But I have been wandering about everywhere and taking a look at everything—never grasped anything firmly. Seizing, gripping—that's the essence of every mastery. You have proved this for sculpture, but I think that no creative artist, can be anything so long as his hands have no share in shaping things. You have often said to me: 'You can only *look* at things.' Now I understand this, shut my eyes and feel with my fingers. It will work or break. Why, he is no musician who has to look at his instrument. *Χειρες ααπτοι, ητορ αλκιμον*, that is all, it must form a whole, not just *μυριαν αρεταν ατελει νοω γενειν*.

I should like to pray like Moses in the Koran: Lord make room for me in my narrow breast.

There isn't a day on which I don't talk to you, and I often think: 'If only one could get on with him.' It will come, it will come. The boy in his armour* wanted to go on the foray too soon and you ride too fast. Enough, I won't be idle, I'll go my way and do what I can, and if we meet again, things will sort themselves out.

For the last fortnight I have been reading your *Fragments*, for the first time, I don't need to tell you what they mean to me. That I mostly took up your meaning when you spoke of the Greeks was a delight to me; and yet nothing has descended upon me like a visitation of the gods, nothing has filled my heart and mind through and through with their warm, holy presence, as has the passage about *thought and feeling forming expression*. So heartfelt was my joy.

I beg you, let us try if we cannot draw nearer together oftener; you know how you would open your arms to the man who could be to you what you are to me. Just because in the nature of things we often almost come to blows, do not let us start back like weaklings; can we, like them, not sustain the shock when our passions clash? That is truer of me than of you. In a word, if you have anything against me, say so, straight out and seriously or in anger, with a sneer—just as it comes. And I tell you frankly I was furious over your answer to my *Felsweihe*, and rated you for an intolerant parson. It wasn't fair the 'pagan priest' and 'with impudent hand writing in the name'.† If I had been wrong to strike a chord of

* Georg in *Götz von Berlichingen*.

† *Felsweihegesang an Psyche*, a poem by Goethe dedicated to 'Psyche', i.e. Caroline Flachsman, Herder's fiancée, to which Herder had retaliated with a sharp sarcastic poem.

mourning for your girl, you would have been bound to lay about you with fire and sword. I know quite well, it's just your way; you'll stick to it, well and good. Only don't make such long pauses with your Walter Shandyish self defence.

As to this, in the future you'll suffer no interference in your right to cause your girl melancholy hours. So I have that off my chest now.

I shall say nothing of our company of saints; I am νεοφύτος and really I have so far only kept along beside the others. Merck is my strong ally, but there's more common need than purpose in that.

A word about my *Berlichingen*. Your letter was a great comfort to me. I had already a lower opinion of it than you. I at once fully understood your statement: 'Shakespeare has completely spoiled you.' Enough; I have to melt it down, clear it of all slag, mix it with new and nobler material and re-mould it. It will then again appear before you.

'It is all only thought out.' That annoys me too. So is [Lessing's] *Emilia Galotti* only 'thought out', not even chance nor any stray fancy have a look in. With a bit of commonsense you can find the reason for every scene, I should almost say for every word. That's why I don't like the play, though apart from this it is a masterpiece; nor do I like mine. If there was not so much that remains just a vague intuition at the back of my mind, flashing up now and then, and if I could dare to hope: 'when beauty and greatness have woven themselves into the texture of my feeling, I shall do, speak and write good and beautiful things, without knowing why'—

Good-bye. I have just got No. 54 of the *Frankfort Journal*.

1772-1775

Jeder Jüngling sehnt sich so zu lieben,
Jedes Mädchen so geliebt zu sein.
Ach, der herrlichste von unsern Trieben,
Warum quillt aus ihm so grimme Pein?

Motto zur zweiten Auflage
von *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*

Every youth longs so to love, every girl so to be loved.
Ah, why does such bitter sorrow well from our noblest
impulse?

Motto to the second edition of
The Sorrows of Young Werther

IN the spring of 1772 Goethe again left Frankfort and went to Wetzlar to gain experience at the Reichskammergericht, the Supreme Court of the Empire. He did not stay there long however. Soon after his arrival he fell in love with Charlotte Buff, daughter of a magistrate. Almost from the beginning Goethe knew his love to be hopeless, as Charlotte was already engaged to marry J. C. Kestner, Secretary to the Hanoverian Legation at the Supreme Court. Flight soon seemed to Goethe the only possible solution to this situation, but when he had left he let himself carry on a lively correspondence with Kestner, with Charlotte herself and with her young brother Hans. The memory of his love for Lotte haunted him until he was able to get peace two years later by weaving round it the novel *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. In the novel the love affair was represented as the life tragedy of the hero; Werther was not only Goethe himself but also K. W. Jerusalem, a young man at the Supreme Court who had shot himself because of his hopeless love for the wife of a friend.

In the two years between his return from Wetzlar and the publication of *Werther* Goethe continued with his lawyer's practice in Frankfort, but matters of business now frequently took him to Darmstadt, where he gained the friendship of Merck, an important government official and writer, and of Herder's fiancée, Caroline Flachsland, called 'sister Caroline' in the letters. Others who joined the circle of his friends were Betty Jacobi and Johanna Fahlmer, the 'little aunt' of Betty Jacobi's husband Fritz. Fritz Jacobi himself, writer and poet, later well known as the author of two sentimental novels, *Allwill* and *Woldemar*, and of several philosophical writings, mainly about Spinoza, became Goethe's friend soon afterwards. Other new friends were the novelist Sophie von La Roche and her daughter Maximiliane, soon to be the wife of P. A. Brentano, a Frankfort merchant.

During this period Goethe dramatised *Götz von Berlichingen*, wrote the farce *Das Jahrmarktsfest von Plundersweilern*, two religio-philosophical essays, the tragedy *Clavigo*, a satire on the poet Wieland, which was published by some of his friends rather against Goethe's wish, and a number of new lyrics.

While *Götz von Berlichingen* had already made Goethe widely known, the impact of *Werther* was tremendous, throughout Europe. People of importance came in growing numbers to see the author. Among them was the poet Klopstock, whose odes and poem *Messias* had given him a place among the best German poets. In December 1774, the two young Weimar princes, Carl August and Constantin, visited Goethe; they were on their way to Paris with Constantin's tutor Major von Knebel. Goethe

was the more interested to meet the Heir Apparent, Carl August, whose reign was to begin in a few months' time, as he was just then to study the newly published *Patriotische Phantasien* by Justus Möser, and this had given him a new interest in political theory. Carl August suggested that Goethe should come to Weimar, but a formal invitation did not come for some time.

Goethe felt rather disappointed when no letter came from Weimar, but he had no cause to fear he was forgotten, for *Werther* was still meeting with stupendous success everywhere. Nicolai, a well-known critic in Berlin, had published a parody of it, according to which Werther was unable to shoot himself, because his pistols were loaded with hen's blood, but this only served to increase the public's interest. Goethe's own interest however had already passed to other things. About the same time as *Werther* or immediately afterwards, he wrote, in addition to many lyrics, a play, *Stella*, two plays, *Mahomet* and *Prometheus*, which remained unfinished, two operettas, *Erwin und Elmire* and *Claudine von Villa Bella*, some scenes of his great tragedies *Egmont* and *Faust*, and several passages for Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Lavater, a Swiss pastor and author of several theological books, had visited the author of *Götz* in Frankfort and had interested Goethe in physiognomy.

By now Goethe was again in love, this time with Lili Schönmann, the daughter of a rich merchant in Offenbach near Frankfort.

His correspondence continued to widen, a new correspondent of his at this time being the poet Bürger, best known by his ballad *Lenore*. It was the fashion then to write letters sometimes in a rather odd way. For instance two young writers and poets—Count Friedrich and Count Christian Stolberg—persuaded their sister Auguste to write anonymously to Goethe, whom they did not yet know. Soon afterwards however they came to Frankfort, and in the spring they went together to Switzerland. Friedrich Stolberg's motive for this journey was to forget an unhappy love affair and Goethe's 'to see whether he could get along without Lili'. He soon realised that this would not be easy; on the other hand Lili's father was reluctant to bestow his daughter on a man with only a small lawyer's practice and the uncertain income of a poet. Goethe himself however, despite his and Lili's love for one another, became gradually convinced that a life after the Schönmann pattern would be incompatible with his ideals as a poet and as a man; as time went on he grew more and more restless.

15 To J. C. KESTNER*

Wetzlar,
10th September 1772.

He will be gone, Kestner, he will be gone by the time you get this note. Give Lotte the enclosed. I had been quite calm, but what you said rent me asunder. I can't say anything at present, but just adieu. I wouldn't have held out if I had stayed a moment longer. Now I am alone, and I am off to-morrow. Oh my poor head!

To Fräulein CHARLOTTE BUFF
[enclosed with the above letter]

Wetzlar,
10th September 1772.

I hope to come back some day, but God knows when. Lotte, think how I felt while you were speaking, knowing I was seeing you for the last time. Not the last time, and yet I leave to-morrow. He is gone. What spirit was it that led you both to that subject? I had the chance to speak freely of what I felt, but *I* was thinking of this life, of your hand that I was kissing for the last time. Now I am alone and can weep. I go, leaving you both happy, and stay on in your hearts. I'll see you again, but not to-morrow means never. Tell my boys he is gone. No more now.

16 To KESTNER

Frankfort,
Friday, 25th September 1772.

Lotte didn't dream of me, that makes me cross and I want her to dream of me to-night, this very night, and not to tell you about it either. That bit in your letter annoyed me, when I re-read it. She didn't even dream of me, an honour we show even to the most indifferent things that are about us during the day. And—I who have been about her, body and soul, and dreamt of her day and night!

God knows, even at my wisest I am a fool, and it was an evil genius that drove me to Wolpertshausen.† And yet, it was a good genius. I couldn't have wished my days in Wetzlar better spent, and yet the gods will give me no more of such days. They know how to punish, and Tantalus—Good-night. I've just been saying it also to Lotte's silhouette.

* Betrothed to Charlotte Buff, with whom Goethe was in love.

† Where Goethe had met Charlotte Buff for the first time.



Lotte Kestner – pastel by J. H. Schroder (1768)

Saturday, after dinner.

This is the time when I used to come and see her. This is the hour when I found her at home, and now I've time and to spare for writing. If only you could see how busy I am. Leaving everything so abruptly, everything where my happiness was centred for four months.

I have no fear you will forget me, and yet in my mind I'm planning to see you again. Whatever happens, I am determined not to see Lotte till I can tell her in confidence that I am in love, in real earnest.

What news of my dear boys, of Ernst? I had better not write to you but leave my imagination in peace. But there hangs the silhouette; and that's worse than anything. Farewell.

17 To KESTNER

*Darmstadt,
29th November 1772.*

Thanks, dear Kestner, for the account of poor Jerusalem's death; it touched us deeply. You shall have it back, once a copy is made.

Merck and his wife both send their regards. She always says you must be a very good man. Henry goes to the theatre every evening and thinks of nothing else. Your greetings to Fräulein Flachsland brought me a kiss; do send them often, I am delighted to act as bearer. I was to tell you she wishes you joy a thousand times, and everyone would love to know Lotte. I often talk about her, for then people smile and suspect she is my sweetheart, and then Merck assures them I am entirely innocent. Give my love to Dorte and Caroline and all the boys. I thought of writing to Lotte yesterday. But then I thought her only answer would be that we should leave things as they are; and I have no mind yet to shoot myself [like Jerusalem]. I've written to Gotter and sent him my 'Baukunst'.

18 To HERDER

*Darmstadt,
5th December 1772.*

Am I to let your bride's message go without any little note from me? No, Herder, we're not so poor as that yet. God knows how fond we are of you, and our conversations about you lately would cover a ream of paper. Thanks for your letters and the good wishes

‘Ossian’ brought. We are unchanged and a bit of difference here and there doesn’t count, and it will be splendid if you come to us in the spring. My father sends his regards; of course you’ll be a welcome guest in our house. ‘Sister Caroline’ is an angel, and how she loves you; I bring you nearer to her, and it has been heavenly to dream about it all. Farewell meantime. Do let a little goodness and kindness come to us from you. Even your Pauline chiding, O Dean, is more precious to us than myrrh, bracing as a scrubber and a rough cloth after a bath.

I’m quite an artist now, bold and happy. Delighted my ‘Erwin’ interested you.

Merck is writing verses and printing them. We see ourselves in each other, and share the joys and tedium of this life. So do hurry up and come.

19 To KESTNER

*Frankfort,
December 1772.*

Dear Kestner, I got your letter just as I had sealed up the roll you will be getting by the post that leaves to-day. It’s stuff for jackets and pantaloons—what they call ‘Matelot’—for the two little boys. Let them have it on Christmas Eve, that is the right moment. Light a waxlight for each, too, and give them a kiss from me. And Lotte too, the angel. Adieu, dear Kestner, your letter made me blissfully happy. I have had one to-day from brother Lerse in Versailles. Love to all, and don’t forget me. Adieu.

20 To KESTNER

*Frankfort,
25th December 1772.
Christmas morning, very early.*

It is still dark, dear Kestner. I have got up to write by candle light on this morning; this brings back happy memories of former days. I have had coffee made in honour of the day and I will write till it is light. The watchman has sounded his horn already, it woke me up. ‘Praise be to Thee, Jesus Christ.’ I love this season and the songs one sings; and the cold that has set in makes me thoroughly cheerful. I had a wonderful day yesterday; I was anxious about to-day, but it has begun well too, so I’m not worrying about the end of it. Last night I promised my two silhouettes that I would

write to you. The two dear faces hover like angels round my bed. As soon as I got here, I pinned up Lotte's silhouette. They put my bed in while I was in Darmstadt, and Lotte's picture is now above it—such a joy. Lenchen's is on the other side. Many thanks, Kestner, for this dear picture. It is more like what you wrote to me of her than anything I had imagined. It shows what folly it is for us to guess and dream and prophesy.

The watchman has turned this way again; the north wind carries his tune across as if he were blowing just outside my window.

Dear Kestner, I spent yesterday in the country with some fine fellows. We were very noisy and very merry, shouting and laughing the whole time. Usually that isn't good for the following day, but is there anything the high gods cannot turn to good if they choose? They gave me a happy evening; I drank no wine, so I looked on nature with a dispassionate eye. A beautiful evening. Night fell as we came back. It always touches a chord in me, you know, when the sun is already low in the sky and darkness has spread from the east to north and south, and now only a disk of fading light glows low in the west. In flat country, Kestner, it is a most magnificent sight. On my rambles when I was younger and felt more warmly, I used to watch for hours and see the sun sink and fade. I stood awhile on the bridge. The dim town to right and left, the calm glowing horizon, the reflection in the river—it made a wonderful impression on me, one that I welcomed with open arms. I ran to the Geroch's, asked for pencil and paper and, happy as I was, sketched the whole picture in a warm soft glow, just as it lingered within me. The Geroch's joined in my pleasure, feeling all I had put into it, and that gave me confidence too. I suggested tossing for it, but they wouldn't; they wanted me to send it to Merck. It's hanging here on my wall at the moment, and I am as pleased with it to-day as I was yesterday. We spent a happy evening together like people to whom fortune has brought some great gift, and I fell asleep thanking the Saints in Heaven for making our Christmas rich with childlike joy. On my way across the Market Square I saw all the candles and toys, and thought of you and the dear boys at home. I can see you coming to them like a messenger from Heaven with your blue Bible in your hand and their joy when you open it. If I could have been with you, I should have wanted to light a feast of wax tapers that would have mirrored the glory of Heaven in their little heads.

The city guards are coming from the Mayor's, rattling their keys.

The first grey light of dawn is reaching me over my neighbour's roof, and the bells are ringing Christians together.

Yes, I feel uplifted, in my room up here; it hasn't been so dear to me for many a day. It is bright with the happiest of pictures, bidding me a friendly good-morning. Seven heads copied from Raphael's, inspired by the spirit of God. I have made a copy of one of them, and I am satisfied though not really happy. And there are my dear girls' silhouettes too; Lotte's and Lenchen's as well. Tell Lenchen I am as keen to come and kiss her hand as the Monsieur who wrote those love-letters. He's a mighty poor fish. I would stuff my daughter's coverlet with billets-doux like these, and she will sleep under it as peacefully as a child. My sister laughed and laughed, she has some letters like this from her younger days. That sort of thing must seem as sickening as a rotten egg to any girl with good feeling. I have changed Lotte's comb; this one isn't such a good colour or shape as the first, but I hope it will be more useful. Lotte has a little head,—what a little head!

Daylight is coming fast; if good fortune comes as quickly, there'll soon be a wedding. I must write one more page; I'll pretend not to notice the daylight.

My love to Kielmansegg. Don't let him forget me.

That miserable hound in Giessen,* fussing about us like the old woman in the Gospel about her lost penny, and spying and rummaging about everywhere in our concerns, whose name ought not to defile any letter with your or Lotte's name on it! The wretch is angry because we don't pay attention to him, and he tries to provoke us into thinking of him. He has been so overhasty in writing about my 'Baukunst', obviously it is grist for his mill, and he dashed off a foul review for the *Frankfort Journal*; I've heard about it. He is a real donkey, munching the thistles that grow round my garden, gnawing at the hedge that guards it from creatures like himself, and braying his critical Hee-Haw as if to tell the owner in the arbour: 'I am here too.'

Adieu now, it is daylight. God be with you; I always am. The day has made a festive beginning. I have to waste the good hours, alas, writing reviews; but I'll do it cheerfully, it is for the last number.

Farewell, and don't forget me, an odd creature, sometimes Dives and sometimes Lazarus.

Love to all the dear ones. And let me have news of you all.

* Professor Schmidt.

21 To KESTNER

*Frankfort,
March 1773.*

It's really horrid and rude of you not to give me the commission about the rings. As if it wasn't the natural thing for me to undertake it. To spite you, however, and the devil who prompted you to take it from me, I mean to order them and see to it that they are as beautiful as the crowns of the elect. Adieu. And no message for your Angel. Hans is a good boy; thank him from me. Adieu.

22 To KESTNER

*Frankfort,
end of March 1773.*

It is not my fault you didn't get the rings a week ago; here they are now. I do hope you like them. I, at least, am pleased with them. They are the second ones. A week ago the wretch sent me a pair quite shockingly made. 'Away with them, make new ones'; I think these are all right now. May they be the beginning of a chain of bliss linking you to earth as if to Paradise. I am yours, but from now on I am no longer eager to see either you or Lotte. I am even going to take her silhouette out of my room at Easter which I hope will be your wedding-day, or even the day after-to-morrow. I'm not going to hang it up there again till I hear her first child is born, that will begin a new stage; and then I shall love not her but her children—a little for her sake of course—but that doesn't matter. And if you ask me to be godfather, my spirit shall rest doubly on the boy and he may even turn out a fool over girls who are like his mother.

Isn't it a happy chance that the picture of Hymen is on the back of this sheet?

Be happy and go, then, to Hanover. Anyway you are not coming to Frankfort and I am glad; if you did, I would go away. A good journey to Hanover, and Adieu. I have sealed up Lotte's ring as you told me. Adieu.

To Charlotte Buff, known up till now as 'dear Lotte', to be handed to her at the 'Teutsches Haus'.

May the thought of me ever be with you in your happiness, like this ring. Dear Lotte, when a long time has passed, we shall meet

again; you with the ring on your finger, and I the same as ever, your own—there's no real or fitting name for me; but you know me.

23 To KESTNER

*Frankfort,
April 1773.*

God bless you, for you have surprised me. When Good Friday came I was going to make a grave and bury Lotte's silhouette. Now it hangs there still, and shall hang till I die. Farewell. Love to your Angel and to Lenchen; she must become a second Lotte, and then she will be as happy. I am wandering in waterless deserts, my hair is my shade and my blood my spring of water. I like to think of your ship with its gay bunting and shouts of joy, safe in harbour first. I am not going to Switzerland. Under and above God's heaven I remain your friend and Lotte's.

24 To Frau CHARLOTTE KESTNER *

*Frankfort,
31st October 1773.*

I don't know if I am right in supposing, Lotte dear, that before long you will be needing a *négligée*, but at least I think so. And reflecting on this important matter, I said to myself: 'She likes to wear white, muslin is out of question in winter, unless it's quilted, and then she'll look too grandmotherly in it.' At this juncture the prudent Goddess of Fashion entered and handed me the enclosed stuff which has every merit but that of lasting. It is muslin, so it has all those merits, and the heavy satin stripes make it a winter material. In short, off with it to the tailor, and tell him to make a neat job of it. N.B. It must not be lined with anything but white; the ones I have seen had a white linen lining. There's just enough for a *négligée* to wear over some kind of hoop.

I am also sending you the bits left over from the blue and white bed-jacket; please don't forget this old tried friend because of the elegant new one.

Adieu, Lotte dear, give my love to your good husband; think of old times as I do.

Frankfort, 31st October, which is
Wolfgang's Day.

* Née Buff.

Frankfort,
4th December 1773.

Most honoured Sir, it seemed in order to delay my answer to your gracious letter of 1st November, containing a warrant of attorney and a gold ducat, until I was in a position to give you some news relevant to the same.

The enclosed note from Amtmann Luther will show you, Sir, how I began by giving him a friendly warning and suggesting to him that he should make his peace with the Registrar, Herr Horn; but you will also note, Sir, what a firm stand he takes, saying he did indeed incur the debt, but that he paid it long since.

As an action is now bound to follow, allow me Sir, to bring these facts to your notice before this event occurs.

First let me inform you, Sir, that the account sent to me was wrongly added and that a closer reading showed the total to be not 61 thaler 18 groschen 4 pfennig, but 62 thaler 7 groschen 4 pfennig. Although an *error calculi* is not usually of great importance, strict accuracy is necessary in the case of an account which presumably will later have to be the subject of an oath.

Next I should have wished this account to have been identical with that previously sent to Herr Luther; but even this is of little moment, for it was increased not by an alteration in the totals but by the addition of a new item.

The proof which our opponents' denial imposes upon us would of course be most easily furnished by testifying to the accuracy of the account-book. There is, however, the question of how it is compiled and whether it has been kept in a sufficiently orderly and business-like manner (for I take it that it is simply the record of the outlay for the students' board in the house), to constitute a *semiplenam probationem*. Should there be omissions, we should be obliged to have recourse to witnesses in order to refute the arguments of the other party.

Further, Sir, arrangements will have to be made to deposit a guarantee-sum *pro reconventionem et expensis* for without this no stranger is permitted to seek justice in the courts here. It may be fixed at 50 Thaler our currency, or possibly at a higher sum.

I wished to communicate all this to you beforehand, Sir, for your further consideration before I set to work. May I beg you to give me precise instructions on the above points, and to convey my

* One of the two extant letters from Goethe's practice as a lawyer.

humble respects to Registrar Horn. I remain, honoured Sir, your most obedient servant.

Kindly return to me the original of Herr Luther's note.

26 To Frau BETTY JACOBI

Frankfort,
31st December 1773.
The last day of the year.

Going, going—now it's gone. Be happy in the new year and count me one of yours as we count you one of us; that keeps everything *vice versa* the same, and that is what I like so much, for nobody to notice that fleeting time meddles with everything.

My prospects for the new year have got themselves up like a peepshow. Max Laroche is marrying and coming to live here. Her future husband seems to be a likeable sort of person, so cheers! that means some more dear people here, though anything but first class brains, as you must have suspected already. For between ourselves, it's the trickiest thing going, this business of acquaintances, friendships and love-affairs; you think you hold it safe by all four corners, and then r-rrr-r! the Devil ups and tears a hole in the middle, and it's all spilt. Just what happened to me lately and it annoyed me a great deal. So, to come back to what I was saying, I am much keener than I was to look for where there is anything dear and friendly and good-humoured too, etc. For I find all kinds of unexpected things. For instance I have several times been on the point of falling in love. Heaven forfend! But in any case, you will be told at once, Mamachen, should this disaster happen.

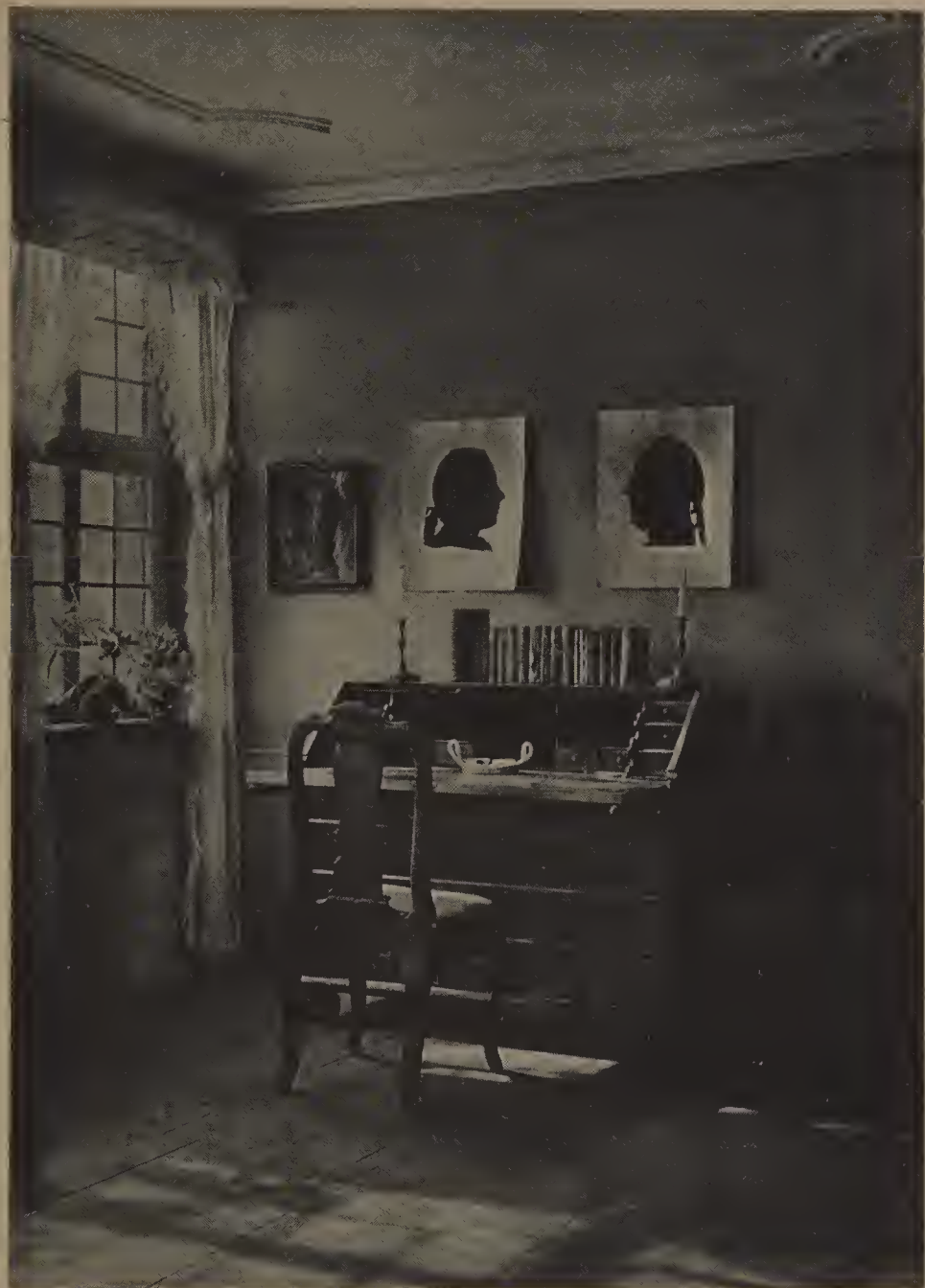
I don't like to say how beautifully I have been drawing lately, for I am still a good deal in arrears.

Besides, the man* who portrayed Hanover-Lotte is a man who knows his business. It's her, from head to foot. Only that I couldn't have recited it all like that in detail, with being so in love with the whole; God has willed that a lover should be a poor observer.

About the review,† I am as innocent as a child, and this time you have seen ghosts with looking for them. I really sent it to make you laugh about me. I had written to Aunt how I had egged on Deinet,

* Fritz Jacobi.

† In the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen*, a review of Wieland's *Der Teutsche Merkur*.



Goethe's Study in Frankfort

and I really hoped he would show himself up; and look he's as polite as a lap-dog. My word upon it, there is not a drop of milk or gall of mine in it.

Heaven reward Hauptmann Dobel for helping you get through this dark, wretched time. But verily, he has his reward. It's still fixed that something is coming at carnival-time. So Adieu. Is the little boy growing? Ah, dear lady, in the last three-quarter year I've married off three or four couples, but still nobody tells me of any interesting circumstances.

Much love to Aunt; I was going to write to her, but I just can't picture her in Düsseldorf, indolent and lazy, with a cold; my dramatic genius lets me down there.

27 To HANS BUFF

Frankfort,
January 1774.

Dear Hans, here's a *praemium virtutis et diligentiae* for you for New Year. And to show you what we in Frankfort are like, here's a brand new penny as well.

Love to all good people and don't forget me.

28 To G. A. BÜRGER*

Frankfort,
12th February 1774.

Here is the second edition of my 'Götz'. I have been wanting to write to you for some time, and the few hours I have spent with your friend Destorp have decided me.

I am taking the credit to myself for breaking down the paper wall that separates us. Our voices and our hearts, too, have often met. Is life not short and empty enough? Those whose ways lie side by side ought surely to get in touch with each other.

If you are working at anything, send me it. I will do so too. It gives me confidence. Don't show it to anybody but friends, and I will do the same. And promise never to make a copy.

Destorp and I have been skating together; my heart seemed to thaw in his lovable presence. Farewell.

* Best known as the author of the ballad 'Lenore'.

*Frankfort,
26th April 1774.*

Thanks, dear Brother, for your care for your brother's salvation. Believe me, we shall come to understand each other in time. Dear Friend, you treat me like an unbeliever who wants to understand, who wants proofs, who has no experience. And the opposite is true of me. You will find a good deal explained in the manuscript I'll send you soon.

Am I not more resigned than you about proofs and understanding? Have I not the same experience as you? Perhaps I am a fool not to humour you by using the same words as you and not to show you my innermost soul by pure experimental psychology, and to explain to you that I am simply a man and that, therefore, I can only feel like other men? Every disagreement between us is nothing but a difference about words, because having another point of view I use other terms when I speak of things and their relation to one another.

That is and always will be the source of all controversies.

And you keep trying to catch me out with proofs! Do I need proof that I exist? That I feel? The only proofs I love and value are those that show me that thousands, or one other, before me felt just what strengthens and upholds me.

Man's word is God's word to me, whether priest or harlot has collected it as Holy Writ or scattered it as fragments. I embrace my brother, be he Moses, Prophet, Evangelist, Apostle, Spinoza or Machiavelli; and I can say to every one of them: Friend you are like me, you feel the details deeply, beautifully, but the whole will not go into your head any more than into mine.

*Frankfort,
May 1774.*

That's another care off my shoulders now. Give the little boy a kiss from me and another to the one and only Lotte. Tell her I can't imagine her a mother. It's quite impossible. I still see her as she was when I left her (so I don't know you as a husband or anything but this old relationship, and I must warn you not to feel hurt if some day you see me patch on others' feelings to it).

* A Swiss pastor, friend of Lavater.

Do please leave all this nonsense in brackets here till later, time will make it plain. Love me as I love you both, and the world can know no more devoted friends.

The wretched stuff I wrote against Wieland makes more stir than I thought. I hear he takes it well; so it is I who am at fault.

31 To F. G. KLOPSTOCK

*Frankfort,
28th May 1774.*

Yesterday I had a letter from Schönborn in Algiers and he writes: 'Klopstock is going to ask Boie to get him some of your works.' But why should I not write to Klopstock and send him something myself, whatever it is and whatever interest he may take in it? I would make a pilgrimage to his grave, so why not speak to him while he is alive? Here then is a play that I do not suppose will ever be printed, and that I beg you will send straight back to me. As soon as some things I have finished are printed, I shall send them to you or at least let you know. I should like you to know what really true feelings bind me to you.

32 To HANS BUFF

*Frankfort,
August 1774.*

So you have lost a dear brother and I one of my dear boys. Be twice or three times as good to comfort Papa and me in our loss. Love to all. Let me know often what is happening. Don't you know every little trifle that concerns you interests me? I've been away a long time and yet I've always been with you. Adieu. Send my letter to Lotte on to her nicely.

33 To FRIEDRICH JACOBI

*Frankfort,
21st August 1774.*

I'm writing to you, in my own room, after a frugal supper, the cloth's still laid, the wine's still there; and after a barren afternoon here is your letter and a hundred ideas astir . . .

You see, my dear fellow, the beginning and end of all my writing is to reproduce the world around me; the world within me seizes, combines, re-creates, moulds and presents it all anew, in its own form and manner. God be praised, this remains for ever a mystery,

and I have no wish to reveal it to those who gape and gossip.

I wish I could have you—and someone else—here, I've so many, many things on my heart. But it's good too to scribble a few bits. I have been enjoying the Memoires of Beaumarchais, *de cet aventurier françois*. They roused my romantic enthusiasm, the characters and actions fused in my mind with others, and my 'Clavigo' was born. That's happiness for I enjoyed it and I defy the critics knife to sever any translated passages without wounding, without mortally injuring the story or at least the vital structure of the play. But why should I talk at all about my children? If they live, they'll scramble along somehow, the world's wide enough . . .

34 To Frau CHARLOTTE KESTNER

*Frankfort and Langen,
26th-31st August 1774.*

Who's gone out of my room this minute? Lotte, dear Lotte, you can't guess. You will guess a lot of well-known and unknown people before you come to Frau Catrin Lisbet, my old stocking-laundress from Wetzlar, the gossip you know, who loves you as everyone about you has done your whole life long; she can't make a living in Wetzlar any more, and my mother hopes to find her some work. I brought her up to my room, she saw your silhouette, and cried out: 'Oh, darling Lotte,' toothless yet full of real feeling. To greet me she kissed my coat and hand and told me how you had been so naughty, then a good child later-on and didn't let on how she had been beaten because of you for taking you to Lieutenant Meyer's, and he had been in love with your mother and had wanted to see you and to give you something, but she had not suffered it, and everything and so on and so on. You can imagine how I treasure this woman and that I shall look after her. If saints' bones and lifeless rags that have touched the saint's body deserve to be worshipped and preserved and cared for, why not the creature that touched you, bore you in her arms as a child, led you by the hand, the creature that perhaps you often begged for something. Begged, Lotte—you! And is this creature to ask something from me! Angel of Heaven! One more thing, Lotte dear. It made me laugh: she showed me how you often annoyed her, dangling your little hands, as you still do; it was as if your spirit was hovering about us. And about Carline, Lehnchen, all, and what I had not

seen and had seen, and in the end of ends it was all Lotte and Lotte and Lotte and Lotte and Lotte, and without Lotte nothingness and want and sadness and death, Adieu Lotte. Not a word more to-day. 26th August.

Yesterday, the 26th, I started a letter to you, now I'm sitting here in Langen between Frankfort and Darmstadt, waiting for Merck whom I had sent for here, and I feel I want to write to you. Two years ago to-day I sat at your side nearly the whole day, slicing beans till about midnight, and the 28th* began solemnly, with tea and friendly faces, oh Lotte, and you assured me with all the openness and sensitive feeling I have always so loved in you, that you both still loved me; for see, it would be sad indeed if the passage of time should gain the upper hand of us too. Very soon I am sending you a prayer-book or treasury or whatever you like to call it, to strengthen you every morning and evening in happy memories of friendship and love. To-morrow you are sure to be thinking of me. To-morrow I'll be with you, and good Frau Meyer has promised to send her little spirit to fetch me. It's a glorious morning, the first longed-for rain after a four weeks' drought; it refreshes me as much as the countryside, and to think I'm enjoying it in the country too! Gotter was here the day before yesterday; he is going with two of his sisters to visit a sister in Lyons; he is as good as always, and very ill but cheerful; we lived over old times again, he greeted your silhouette, I chatted to him of all kinds of things, etc., and he left again. I am lucky; when my friends travel at all, they must look in on me, pass by me and pay toll.

The 31st August. My dear love, this little page I wrote last Saturday in Langen before Merck arrived, belongs in here. We had a happy day together, Sunday was alas very dry. But that night I dreamed of you, as if I had come to you again and you had kissed me heartily. All the time I have been away from you I have never, waking or dreaming, seen you so clearly before me. Adieu. The silhouettes here are one each for you, the Meyers, and Zimmermann. Tell Kestner he ought to write to me again. Adieu, Lotte. Thank you for liking to read what I write and am having printed, for I love you too. Kiss your little boy from me; when I can come to you, without much talking or writing, I'll be standing before you again, just as I once vanished, and you won't get a fright this time or want to call me 'horrid face'. Love to the Meyers. I wish I could see you with the child in your arms. Adieu, Adieu.

* Goethe's birthday.

Frankfort,
31st August 1774.

I am glad you have gone to the country, it will refresh you, mind and body. Besides I hope it is a good sign that you will break 'out of the paper-stronghold of philosophical and literary tyranny. That robs us of all joy in our own powers. For we seem to be led about now by this man, now by that, into his garden, plantation, labyrinth or maze, and each of them points to the work of his hands. But then we look at our own hands: God has filled them too with strength and all sorts of skill, and we feel sick of all the gazing and sponging on the creative joy of others, and we go back to our own plot, sow, plant and water, accept our limitations and enjoy ourselves in our small circle.

Blessings on you wherever you are in God's world; let strong love grow in you, and simplicity, and creative power will blossom out of it. Farewell.

Frankfort,
23rd September 1774.

If the book has reached you already, you will understand this enclosed note. I forgot to put it in, in the flurry I live in at present. The Fair is all uproar and screeching, my friends are here, and past and future seem to be moving strangely towards each other.

What will my future be? Ah, you settled people, you have an easier time of it.

Has Meyer come back? Please don't yet lend the book to anyone. Go on loving the one who is alive, and honour the other who is dead.

Now you'll understand the obscure bits in my last letters.

ENCLOSURE

As you read this little book, Lotte, you must surely feel how dear it is to me; I even treasure this copy as if it were the only one in the world. You shall have it, Lotte dear, I have kissed it a hundred times and locked it away so that nobody should touch it. O Lotte! And please don't let anybody see it yet except Meyer; it won't be published till the Leipzig Fair. I would like each of you to read it alone, you alone, Kestner alone; and each of you write me a little note.

Lotte, adieu, Lotte.

* To whom Goethe had sent a copy of *Werther*.

*Frankfort,
October 1774.*

I must write to you at once, my dears, my angry dears, to get it off my chest. It's done now, it's out; forgive me if you can. I don't want to hear anything, anything at all, till events prove that you are worrying needlessly, and till you have had time to feel the innocent mixture of truth and lies in the book itself. Kestner, you loving advocate, you've exhausted, robbed me of everything I could have said in my own defence. But I don't know, my heart has still more to say, though it can't give it words.

I am silent, just telling you of my hopeful feeling, I like to imagine and I trust that fate has let this happen to me to link us closer together. Yes, my very dear ones, love binds us together; and yet I am causing you and your children such unhappy hours by my—call it what you will. Stand firm, I beg of you. How well I recognise you in your last letter; stay like that, and you Lotte too, do please stay like that, come what may. God, they say, Thou orderest all things for the best.

And you, my dear ones, if anger gets the better of you, remember, do remember that your old Goethe, though changed again and again, is now more truly yours than ever.

*Frankfort,
21st November 1774.*

I've got your letter, Kestner! I didn't read it at my own desk, but in a painter's room, for yesterday I began to paint in oils—I must call out to you, 'Thanks, thanks, my good Kestner!' You are the same kind soul as ever! Oh, if I could embrace you, fall at Lotte's feet, only one single minute, it could all be blotted out, made clear, all I couldn't explain even on a ream of paper! Ah, you doubters, I would cry, Oh you of little faith! if you could feel only a thousandth part of what 'Werther' means to thousands of hearts, you would not consider what it has cost you! Here's a note; read it and send it me back faithfully as you receive it.—You've sent me Henning's letter. He doesn't accuse me, he excuses me. Dear Kestner, my brother! Only wait and you shall find help. I would not call 'Werther' back to save my life. Believe me, have faith in me, and your grievances will vanish like spectres in the night, if you only have patience. Before a year is out I promise you

I'll be like a fresh wind from the north, sweeping away mist and fog; I will find the most charming, delightful, loving way to extinguish any suspicion, misinterpretation, etc. that may remain with the gossiping public, herd of swine that they are. 'Werther' really, really had to be! You don't feel him, you only feel me and yourselves and what you call 'stuck on'; but—in spite of you and others—it's woven in. It's you I have to thank that I'm still alive; that shows you're not Albert. So you see—

Give Lotte your hand still warm from mine and tell her this; To know her name uttered by a thousand lips with awe and respect is surely some compensation for anxieties; and they wouldn't trouble one long, were not everything in one's ordinary life a prey to gossip.

If you're good and don't torment me, I'll send you on letters, sounds, sighs for Werther, and if you have faith, then believe all will be well and gossip means nothing. Take this letter to heart—I have kissed it—from your Philosopher

Oh Kestner! You don't feel me embracing you, comforting you—finding my own comfort in your and Lotte's goodness—in distress that frightens you even in just fiction. Lotte, farewell; farewell Kestner—love me—and don't torment me—

Don't show this note to a soul! It is for you two alone! Nobody else! Adieu, my dears! Kestner, kiss your wife and my godchild from me.

And remember my promise. I alone can invent what will stop all talk about you but airy suspicions. I can do it, but it's too soon yet. My kind remembrances to your Hennings.

Yesterday a girl said to me: 'I never knew Lotte was such a pretty name: "Werther" makes it sound so special.'

Another girl wrote the other day: 'Please for Heaven's sake, don't call me Lotte any more! Lottchen or Lolo—whatever you like, but not Lotte, till I am more worthy of the name.'

Oh magic power of love and friendship!

Zimmermann's letter next time; it is too cold to look for it upstairs. I'm going skating to-day. Adieu, my dears.

39 To Frau SOPHIE VON LA ROCHE *Frankfort,*
23rd December 1774.

Dear Mama, I wish I could send you anything as good as your good letter to me. I am glad to give you what I have. I have seen

nothing of the Dean for some time. I've been to Mainz! I followed Wieland's Prince there; he is a grand person. I wrote to Wieland from there, I just felt like it, and I had quite the answer I knew I would get. It is dreadful, I begin not to have any misunderstanding with anybody. There is one between Frau Servièrè and your daughter, only a misunderstanding; but a thing like that runs like a dropped stitch in a stocking, one could have caught it with one needle at the start. . . .

I got back a copy of 'Werther' to-day, one I had lent out. It had been passed round and look, on the first blank page there is written: 'Tais toi, Jean Jacques, ils ne te comprendront point.' It gave me a strange feeling, for that quotation from 'Emil' has always struck me.

My dear Klettenberg is dead. Dead, before I had any idea she was very ill. Dead and buried, while I was away, she who was so dear and meant so much to me . . .

The letter from Reich [the publisher, about your novel] is quite good. No doubt he could pay one Caroline per printed sheet. It doesn't do to think what one gets for one's things. And yet the booksellers are maybe not to blame. My writing hasn't yet buttered my bread, and it never will nor should.

I had to borrow money to pay for the paper used to print my 'Götz von Berlichingen'; that was at a time when a wide public was reading it, and I was getting praise and approval on all sides . . .

Adieu Mama! Written at day-break after the longest night.

40 To Frau JENNY VON VOIGTS*

Frankfort,
28th December 1774.

Madame, We enjoy finding an echo on our walks; it amuses us, we call and it answers. Is the public then harder, less sympathetic than a rock? It is a disgrace for the miserable reviewers to be giving answer from their caves in the name of all those to whom an author or editor has given pleasure.

Here, Madame, are my sincere thanks for your father's 'Patriotic Fantasies'; you are the first to make it known to me and to this district. I take the book round with me; and wherever and whenever I open it, I feel happy; all kinds of wishes, hopes and plans unfold within me.

* Daughter of Justus Möser, author of *Patriotic Fantasies*, which she had edited.

Please convey my respects to your honoured father, receive this greeting as heartily as I send it, and let nothing stand in the way of your publishing the second part.

41 To AUGUSTE, Countess STOLBERG *

*Frankfort,
18th-30th January 1775.*

My dear—I'll not give you any name, for what are friend, sister, loved one, bride, wife or even some word to include them all, compared to the feeling of nearness to——. I can't go on, your letter reached me in a strange hour. Adieu, now, the moment I've begun.

Here I am back again, though——. I feel you can bear it, this broken, stammering utterance, when the image of the Infinite stirs in us. And what is this but love! He had to make man in His own image, after His likeness. So what must we feel when we meet our brothers, our likeness repeating our own selves. This page shall go off now, you shall have it. I wrote it about a week ago, just after I got your letter.

Patience, you will get an answer soon. Meanwhile, here's my silhouette. Please send yours, but not a small one, a big life-size one, please. Adieu from my heart, adieu.

This letter was left lying again; do have patience with me! Write to me, and I'll think of you in my best moments. You ask, am I happy? Yes my dear, I am; and if I am not, at least all these depths of joy and sorrow lie within me. Nothing from outside disturbs, plagues, hinders me. But I'm like a little child, God knows. Adieu, once again.

42 To HERDER and Frau HERDER

*Frankfort,
18th January 1775.*

Your letter† reached me, my dear brother, at a very significant moment. I had just been most vividly recalling the concord and discord of our common life, and look, you walk in and hold out your hand to me—Here is mine, then; let us begin a new life together. For we have really been living on together, I for you, and you for me. And you, dear sister, be kindly and good to me always.

* In 1783 married to the Danish Count Bernstorff. † The first for two years.

I feel so happy in taking a share again in your household and with the little boy. Farewell, both of you. I will send something of what I have been doing, before long.

43 To Countess STOLBERG

*Frankfort,
13th February 1775.*

Imagine, my dear, a Goethe in a braided coat and from head to foot in finery more or less to match, amidst the empty lustre of sconces and chandeliers, moving among all sorts of people, held at the card-table by a pair of fine eyes, driven from one amusement to the next, from the party to the concert and from there to the ball, and paying his court with all the intensity of frivolity to a charming little blonde.* Imagine this and you'll see the present carnival-Goethe, who only lately was stumblingly telling you some of his dim deep feelings, who doesn't care to write to you and sometimes forgets you because he finds himself quite unbearable in your presence.

But there is another figure, in a gray beaver coat and brown silk scarf and boots. He is sensing the spring in the raw air of February, and soon the wide world he loves will be open to him again. Always living in himself, striving and working, he does his utmost to express youth's innocent feelings in little poems and life's sharper flavours in varied plays. And he tries to trace with chalk on gray paper the outline of his friends and the countryside and his cherished belongings. He doesn't look to right or left, he doesn't ask for any opinion on what he has done, for he has always worked on, reached a new step. Nor does he want to jump to an ideal; he lets his feelings struggle and dally and gradually develop into talents. That is the same man who can't forget you, who on an early morning suddenly feels the urge to write to you, and whose greatest happiness it is to live with the best men and women of his time.

There, my dear, I have told you a great deal about my present state; now do the same and tell me about yours. We shall draw closer together like this and think we can see each other—for I warn you I shall often treat you to all sorts of trifles just as they come into my mind.

Another thing that makes me happy is the many excellent people

* Lili Schöнемann, daughter of a Frankfort merchant, with whom Goethe was in love.

who keep coming here and to me from all over the country; some of course are only mediocre and even tiresome. Some are passing through, others stay longer. We don't realise we exist till we discover ourselves in others.

Whether or not I have been told who or where you are, is of no consequence; when I think of you I feel you akin to me, dear and near. And that is what you will remain to me always, as I too shall certainly remain the same in spite of all my floating and fluttering. Farewell—there Gustchen: a kiss; farewell.

44 To Countess STOLBERG

Offenbach,
7th-10th March 1775.

Why shouldn't I write to you, why let the pen lie idle that I used to take up so often? I have always been thinking of you, all the time. And now—staying in the country with dear kindly people*—longing—dear Auguste—God knows I'm a poor child—We finished off Shrove Tuesday, 28th February, with a dance—I was among the first in the ballroom, walking up and down, thinking of you—and then—so much joy and love around me—when I got home in the morning I wanted to write to you, but I didn't, I talked a lot with you—what can I say, since I can't tell you all about my present state, since you don't know me. Dearest Auguste! Be that to me always! I wish I could feel the peace of your touch, your look. My God, what is the heart of man!—Good-night!—I thought writing might make me feel better. No use. I am overwrought. Adieu. To-day's the 6th of March, I think. Date your letters, too, it is most cheering at such a distance.

Good-morning, my dear. Some builders working opposite have wakened me and I can't stay in bed. I'm going to write to my sister and then a little more to you.

It is dark; I was going into the garden, but I had to stop at the door, it is raining heavily. I've thought of you so often. Remembered I haven't thanked you yet for your silhouette. It too confirms what brother Lavater and I think about physiognomy. The calmly meditative, pure, thoughtful brow, the sweet firmness of the nose, the charming lip, the determined chin, everything so noble! Thanks, my dear, thanks!—It has been a wonderful day. Sketched—wrote a scene. I'd perish if I didn't write plays just now.

* The family of J. André, a musician.

I'll be sending you one written out soon. If I could only sit by you and bring it to your heart myself. Don't on any account let it out of your hands, my dear. I don't want it published, some day, please God, I will either bury these 'women and children' of mine in some corner or provide for them; without dangling them in front of the public. I'm so sick of this digging-up and dissecting of my poor 'Werther'. I have only to walk into a room to find there Nicolai's d——d filth; one runs it down, another cries it up, a third says it's not bad, and they are all alike in baiting me. So don't be annoyed at what I say—it doesn't take anything from my inner self, it doesn't touch or affect me in my work, which is simply the stored-up joy and sorrow of my life—for though I find it much 'raisonnabler' to spill hen's blood than one's own—the children upstairs are romping about; it's better for me to join them than to go into all this too deeply.

I have let the eldest girl spell out a page and a half of the 'Paradise Garden' to me, and now I feel better—and so good-bye—Adieu. Why don't I tell you everything? My dear—Patience, have patience with me!

The 10th. In town again, on my sofa. I am writing to you on my knee. My dear, this letter must go to-day and I'll just tell you my mind is fairly calm and my heart fairly free—What am I saying! My dear, how can we find words for what we feel? How can we tell each other anything about our state when it changes from hour to hour?

I hope for a letter from you, and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

Blessings on the good impulse that drove me to sketch my room for you, as it is here before me, instead of writing any more. Keep a place in your heart for this poor young man. May our Father in Heaven give you many such gay and happy hours as I often enjoy and then let the dusk come with tears and then bliss. Amen. Adieu, my dear, adieu.

45 To Fräulein JOHANNA FAHLMER

Frankfort,
30th March 1775.

Here's 'Erwin'.

And Klopstock is here!—

So you will do well to get yourself brought round to us here after dinner, say about three. Where you will find him.

46 To Fräulein FAHLMER

*Frankfort,
end of March 1775.*

Do send me some of the cream to make the hair grow, and the recipe.

47 To C. L. VON KNEBEL

*Emmendingen,
4th June 1775.*

Dear Knebel, here is 'Claudine'; read it to our Duke, when you have time, and then please send it back here to my sister. Thanks for your note; how nice to find you are not drifting away from me. My sincere respects to his Highness. Addio. With luck I'll be off to Schaffhausen to-morrow.

48 To J. C. LAVATER

*Frankfort,
24th July-8th August 1775.*

Tell me about Dr Zimmermann? Where is he now? He must stay with me when he comes back. Don't forget to write and tell him. Ask Herr Schultz for some silhouettes of my ugly old face, and send me them. Your 'Physiognomy'; are you sending me something soon? Here are some notes on the silhouettes of Frau von Stein and the Marchesa Branconi. Get them out and look at them.

STEIN

Firmness
Pleasing and faithful dwelling
on objects
At ease with herself
Loving helpfulness
Artlessness and goodness,
ease of speech
Yielding firmness
Kindly feelings
Constant
Conquers—her weapon a net

BRANCONI

Boldness in enterprise
Acuteness, not penetration
Pure vanity
Subtle, interested helpfulness
Wit, cultivated speech, careful
choice of expression
Love of opposition
Complacency
Acquisitive and tenacious
Conquers—her weapon arrows

I should like you to leave them to me, also Frau von Loev; for the Second Part. They must be printed as clearly as possible. I

would write comments on them and send them to you to make notes, and then I could make it all into one whole. That's how the Second Part ought to be done. But you wretch! Please do take out our family group; it's too dreadful. You disgrace yourself and us. Cut my father's out and use it as a vignette; that one's good. Do please do this. You can do what you like with my head, so long as my mother's doesn't stay like that. If you have a few copies, send them with the ones I ask for in the enclosed note, so that I can cut out my father's head.

If you could find the Fuseli drawings you gave me, please send them too. Thanks for the Chodowieckis and the others.

Here are some lines of Fetti's head. His narrow-mindedness and obstinacy are even more obvious in the bad original print, and there's something low and brutish that the sketch doesn't show.

And what do you think of this, it could be carried out grandly with silhouettes; You know the 'Line of Beauty' from distortion to lifelessness in Hogarth's ['Analysis of Beauty']

The main point of the 'Line of Beauty' is the 'Line of Love', with strength and weakness on either side. Love is the point where they meet. Give me your views on this and we shall write a good little chapter on it, not too bad a thread for the whole fabric.

49 To Countess STOLBERG

Offenbach,
3rd August 1775.

Gustchen! Gustchen! A word, a touch even, to ease my heart. I can't speak. Here! How can I tell you about 'here'? This multi-coloured writing-case, covered with straw, neat little notes ought to be written at it. And these tears, this longing! Quite wrong! If only I could say everything. Here in the girl's room, she who makes me unhappy through no fault of her own, an angel whose limpid hours I trouble! I! Gustchen! A quarter of an hour ago I took your letter from my pocket and read it! Written on the 2nd of June! And you ask, ask for a reply, a word from my heart! And this is the 3rd of August! Gustchen! and I haven't written yet! But I have begun a letter, it's in town. O my heart!—Shall I tap it and pour you too some of the frothy liquid? And how can I talk of Fritz to you, seeing I have often wept for my own misfortune in his? Enough, Gustchen. He is happier than I am. No use my dashing about in the open air for three months, absorbing a thousand new impressions with all my

senses. My angel, here I sit once more in Offenbach, simple as a child, chained like a parrot on its perch; and you Gustchen, so far away. I've often turned to the North; at night on the terrace above the Main I look across and think of you. So far, so far away! And you and Fritz and I! And it all coils in upon itself like a snake. I can't get air enough to write.—But now I won't stop till someone comes to the door and calls me away. And yet, angel, when my heart's need is greatest, I often call out, call to you, Be of good cheer! Bear up, and it will be all right. You will find pleasure in your brothers and we in ourselves. It's this passion that will fan us into flame; we'll stretch our hands out in this need and be brave and good and be carried where one needs no rest. Don't suffer because of us! Bear with us! Give us a tear, a touch of your hand, a moment at your knee. Touch our foreheads with your loving hand. One word of strength, and we are on our feet again.

My mood changes a hundred times a day. I felt so much at home with your brothers, I seemed calm, I was sorry for Fritz who was more wretched than myself, my sufferings were more bearable. Alone now once more.

I seemed to have you there too, with your brothers, my dearest Gustchen, for in love you are all one. Gustchen with us and we with her! And now only her letters! Her letters!—and 'only' to that! And yet they burn in my pocket, it's as if you were there when I open them in a happy moment—but sometimes, often indeed, if my heart is blind and deaf, even these signs of so dear a friendship seem dead ciphers to me—my angel, it's horrible, this blankness. Groping about at night is heaven compared to blindness. —Forgive me; for this confusion and everything—How glad I feel at being able to talk with you like this, how glad when I think you will hold this page in your hand! You! This page! that I touch, that is still white just here. You dear. I can't ever be really wretched. A few words more—I can't stand it here for long, I must be off—But where? — — — — — — — — — —

I've made dashes, for I sat thinking for a quarter of an hour and my spirit flew about the whole world of men. Wretched fate that allows me no middle way. Either gripping, clinging fast to one spot, or raging in the teeth of all the winds that blow! How lucky they are, those that go serenely on, and then every night wipe the dust from their shoes with smugly proper care and gloat like gods over their day's handiwork. — — — — — — — — — —

The Main flows past here and, right opposite on a hill, behind a

cornfield, lies Bergen. You will have heard of the battle of Bergen. Down there on the left with its clumsy tower lies Frankfort, as empty for me now as if swept with a broom; pretty villages further up on the right, the garden down there, the terrace down to the Main.—And on the table here a handkerchief, a hoop with a scarf over it, and the dear girl's riding boots over there. N.B. We are going riding to-day. There's a dress, there hangs a watch; lots of boxes, large cardboard ones for bonnets and hats—I hear her voice.—I may stay, she will get ready in the inner room.—My dear Gustchen, I've told you just how it all looks around me, to let the actual sight drive the spirits away.—Lili was astonished to see me there, I had been missed. She asked who I was writing to, I told her. Adieu, Gustchen. Greetings to Countess Bernstorff. Write to me. Your brothers will have sent you the silhouette. Lavater has had the four 'Heumann's Children' done very well indeed.

The Restless One.

For pity's sake don't let anyone see my letters.

50 To J. H. MERCK

*Frankfort,
8th August 1775.*

Jung is back from Elberfeld and sends his love. What are you up to? How's the young mother, and will the 'congress'* take place soon?

It's sickening, here I am stranded again and kicking myself well and truly for not going to the Devil while I was afloat.† I am looking out for a new chance to slip off. Only I should like to know if you would help me in that case with some money; just for a push-off.

If necessary make it clear to my father at your future 'congress' that he simply must send me to Italy by next spring, that means I must leave by the end of the year. I can hardly stick it till then, punting about in this little pond and solemnly hunting frogs and spiders. Have you written about my manuscripts? Adieu. Make some sketches and send them; you'll get them all back. Amen.

51 To Frau RACHEL d'ORVILLE

August 1775.

Here's a cheese, dear lady; off with it to the cellar! The poor thing's like me; as long as it doesn't feel the sun and I don't see

* Merck's projected visit to Frankfort.

† While in Switzerland.

Lili, we are both solid, brave fellows. So put it in the cellar, just as I am sitting here in Frankfort, for all the world like in an ice-house. And now the usual formulas of respect to the Emperor and the Holy Roman Empire, with a sincere Amen.

52 To Fräulein FAHLMER

*Frankfort,
11th September 1775.*

Back from Offenbach, dearest Aunt!—can't give you either a look or an idea of the whole thing. My head is like a stocking inside out and outside in. Please, please, do look in the Fair for something—for Lili!!! A trinket, a jewel, the latest, the smartest! You're the only one to feel it, and my love too! But not a word to Mama, it's our solemn secret. And not a word to the Gerocks. Please! And you are to tell me what it costs!!!!!!

1775-1779

Wohin willst Du dich wenden?
Nach Weimar-Jena, der grossen Stadt,
Die an beiden Enden
Viel Gutes hat.

Zahme Xenien, 1195

Where do you want to turn your steps? To Weimar-Jena,
that great city where at both ends there is much that is
good.

Tame Xenions, 1195

By now the inner conflict between Goethe's love for Lili, and his longing to break away from the narrow life that threatened to be his as her husband, had grown so acute that Carl August's renewed invitation, when it came at last in the late autumn, rescued Goethe and Lili from an intolerable situation.

Goethe reached Weimar on the 7th November 1775, accompanied by his servant Philipp Seidel.

Weimar with its 7,000 inhabitants was the capital of the Duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, a principality covering about 700 square miles of Thuringia, and with a population of about 100,000. Its second city, Jena, contained 4,000 inhabitants and housed a University maintained by other duchies of Thuringia as well as by Weimar. The people of the duchy lived mainly on the land, but cloth- and stocking-weaving and glass blowing were also carried on; and in Ilmenau there were silver mines, though they had been idle for many years.

The town of Weimar itself lies on the Ilm which flows through the Park on the outskirts of the town. In this Park is the little wooden 'Gartenhaus' which the Duke placed at Goethe's disposal soon after his arrival. The ducal family itself had only temporary quarters in Weimar, as the palace had been burnt down in 1774. But there were several residences on small estates in the country round about—Tiefurt, Ettersburg and Belvedere near Weimar, Dornburg near Jena, and not far from Eisenach, Wilhelmsthal and the Wartburg, where the Minnesingers' contest had been held and where Luther had made his translation of the Bible.

A relatively high proportion of the inhabitants of the town of Weimar was dependent in one way or the other on the Court for a livelihood. As Mine de Staël remarked, '*ce n'était pas une petite ville mais un grand château*'.

The Duke at that time was Carl August; he had begun his reign on 3rd September 1775 at the age of eighteen; the Duchess, née Louise, Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt, was the same age as himself. His mother, the Dowager-Duchess Anna Amalia, had been a Princess of Brunswick; she was only seventeen when she married the then Duke of Weimar. At the age of nineteen, a widow with two sons, she became regent. In 1772 she called the poet Wieland to Weimar; he had just published a work on the education of princes, and she made him tutor to the Heir Apparent. For the younger Prince, Constantin, she chose as tutor a retired Prussian officer, von Knebel, a great student of Latin poetry, who later translated Horace and Lucretius. Court appointments were held at this time by several men of literary talent: Einsiedel, one of the

chamberlains, wrote operas and comedies, and another, von Seckendorff, was a poet, translator and composer. Musaeus, in charge of the pages, wrote novels, a satire on Richardson's *Grandison*, and edited the *Volksmärchen der Deutschen*. Bertuch, the Duke's Secretary, wrote plays and translated *Don Quixote*; another member of the Court circle was the painter Kraus, a fellow-countryman of Goethe. Others were the chamberlains von Kalb, von Wedel—who was a boyhood friend of Carl August—and the Master of the Horse, Josias von Stein. His wife, Charlotte, née von Schardt, had been brought up at Court and was then in attendance on the Duchess; she was thirty-three when Goethe came to Weimar and had had seven children, of whom three sons were alive, Karl, Ernst and Fritz, aged ten, seven and three; Fräulein von Göchhausen was chief lady-in-waiting of the Dowager-Duchess.

A striking characteristic of this Court was the youth of its members. The average age of the sixteen persons just mentioned (not counting the Stein children) was thirty; the Duke and the Duchess were eighteen, and the witty and vivacious Dowager-Duchess only thirty-six. No wonder then that life occasionally took an unusual aspect and overflowed with wit and with the 'genius' of the Storm-and-Stress epoch. And no wonder too that this gave offence in some quarters and that the blame for it was put by disapproving and ill-informed persons on Goethe, the newest and soon most prominent member of the Court circle. He was, after all, not a nobleman, and yet was received by the Duke as his friend and soon as his chief counsellor in all matters, even in politics. One letter reproaching Goethe and the Duke for their way of life came from the poet Klopstock. In Weimar itself Goethe's greatest antagonist was Baron Fritsch, President of the Privy Council, who for a long time refused to agree to Goethe's appointment to it; in the summer of 1776, however, the Duke succeeded in gaining Fritsch's consent; the only other members of the Council besides Goethe were the Duke, Fritsch, and Councillor von Schnauss.

Official duties now occupied more and more of Goethe's time; he spent a great deal of energy in re-starting the silver mines at Ilmenau which had been idle for thirty years. His responsibilities increased yearly. In 1779 political complications threatened Weimar. Frederick II of Prussia was at war with the Emperor Joseph II of Austria over the question of the Bavarian succession (a war fought almost without bloodshed). Frederick sought to involve Weimar in it on his side by claiming the right of recruiting soldiers in its territory. In this difficulty Carl August put Goethe in charge of the War Department, which was responsible for the foreign policy. Goethe suggested that the smaller German states should form a confederacy to enable them to defend their interests against the more powerful states like Prussia, but owing to the indifference of most of the other states, nothing came of this plan. Yet the new post meant a good deal of extra work for Goethe, as it included

the direction of all military affairs. He also accompanied the Duke on a semi-official journey to Berlin.

Though these politico-administrative occupations did not seem to leave Goethe much time for anything else, he continued with his endeavours to paint and draw, and from this time date also his first consistent studies in various branches of science, botany, anatomy and mineralogy. Of his literary works the following (in addition to a large number of lyrical poems) belong to this period: *Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*, a satirical comedy on the contemporary sentimental literature, including his own *Werther*. (In January 1778 a tragic incident reminiscent of *Werther* had occurred when Christiane, daughter of Colonel von Lassberg, a young girl whom Goethe hardly knew, threw herself into the Ilm and was drowned; people said that she had done so because of an unhappy love affair; a copy of *Werther* was found in her pocket.) He also began at that time the novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, first called *Wilhelm Meisters Theatralische Sendung*, wrote the play *Iphigenie in Tauris* as a prose drama, and several scenes of the tragedy *Egmont*, as well as some short plays to be acted by the members of the Court. For in addition to all his work Goethe led a social life, his greatest friends being the Duke, Major Knebel, Herder, now Superintendent of the Churches of Weimar, the poet Wieland, and above all Frau von Stein, in whom his emotional life was more and more centred.

In the autumn of 1779, when peace seemed secured for Weimar, the Duke decided to make a journey to Switzerland with Goethe, which gave the latter the chance of visiting his parents in Frankfort and looking up some of his old friends in the Rhineland.

53 To Fräulein FAHLMER

*Weimar,
22nd November 1775.*

My dear little aunt, my life goes like a sleigh, swift and jingling up and down the promenade. God knows what I am destined for, after passing through all these schools. This one brings new vigour into my life and things will all go well. I can't say anything of my position, it's too complicated, but all goes as it should; makes a great stir here, naturally. Write to me. Wieland is a dear, we are always together, and I love being with his children. His wife is a dear good soul, she is rather like Sophie La Roche. Adieu. Ask Mama to open all the letters with a French envelope. Here is one back. Give it to Papa and ask him to arrange in my name what is necessary to settle the matter with the deacons and to take charge of the Trumbach money; here is a letter for them if he would send it.* Adieu. My love to the dear Gerocks and to Maxmiliane. Write and tell me something of what has happened to that poor dear. Adieu. After all, we may still be happy together on this earth.

Never mind about the above commission to Papa. I'll write to him myself. I hear Fritz was ill, that lovable soul. Wieland has written a long letter to him; I'll probably write to-day.

Give Mama this letter to read.

54 To HERDER

*Weimar,
12th December 1775.*

My dear Brother, the Duke requires a General Superintendent.† There would be an opening here for you, should you have lately changed your plan of going to Göttingen. Let me know about it. Anyway, bear it in mind in case times should change. Farewell. Love to your wife. I'm very well here in every way. Wieland is a good soul and the Duke and Duchess are noble, dear, and charming.

55 To CARL AUGUST‡

*Waldeck,
23rd-26th December 1775.*

It is as natural, my dear lord, for my old gipsy song to come back to me in this secluded spot at night and at this season, as it is for

* Concerning the inheritance of Susanne von Klettenberg with which Goethe had been concerned in his lawyer's practice. † For the Churches in the Duchy.

‡ Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, who was spending Christmas at the Court of Gotha.

me to sit down at once to write it out for you and then scribble you a letter. For indeed, I miss you already, although we have not been parted twelve hours.

They are still sitting downstairs after dinner, smoking and making such a hubbub that I can hear it through the floor; Einsiedel's carrying voice is clearest. I came upstairs, it is half-past eight.

Wind and storm have driven us here, as well as rain and all it brings. The narrow valley to Jena smiled at me in all its bare grandeur, happily lit up by the evening sun. I liked the situation of Jena, but the town itself depressed me. Between there and here there wasn't much to look at. A shower reached us—from Italy, an old man, passing with his barrow, assured us. In Italy it is warm, he said, the warm wind comes from there; he himself had been there in the thirties, he added casually.

Here we are in the midst of the pines among simple, good people. As we rode I wished more than once that you were with us, and again here, too; you would have enjoyed it. At the inns on the way we greeted the printed Carl August,* and we felt how dear you are to us, that your name even beside the 'l.s.' gave us pleasure.

Einsiedel has gone to bed. He is in the throes of indigestion, and coffee and brandy have failed to put him straight. I am going to bed too. A hearty good-night.

One more word before I go to bed. As I was riding through the night towards the pine-clad hills, a sense of the past, of my fate and of my love came over me . . .

Now good-night, and again good-night . . .

Sunday, at day-break. Miserable thaw; seems to put the whole day out of tune; we'll see what we can do to put it right again. The glorious morning-star is high in the sky; I'm taking it as my emblem from now on.

Einsiedel is miserably sick; I dreamed the whole night through of campaigns that all turned out well, in particular of a journey from Switzerland to Poland which I took to see Marshall Saxe and serve under him—in my dream he was still alive.

Church is beginning; we are not going, but I am sending to ask if the parson has a copy of the 'Odyssey' and if not, I shall send to Jena. It is impossible to do without it in this Homerically simple world. A few lines in particular occurred to me and struck me

* Probably on the proclamation announcing the recent beginning of his reign on his majority.

specially this morning; I had slept long enough and the day was slow in coming. They went something like this: 'And wrapped in their skins they lay by the smouldering hearth, above them the wet wind swept through the unending night and they lay in refreshing sleep till the late dawn.'

I must send to the rector in Bürgel for a Homer; in the meantime I have been reading the Bible. Here is a piece from Isaiah: 'Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof . . . The new wine mourneth, the vine languishes and all the merry-hearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. There shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.'

Now I must send off the man who is to bring this to Weimar. My good lord, I beg you will not show this to anyone but Wedel. All around me, Einsiedel, Kalb, Bertuch, send most respectful greetings.

We fishes will never
Forget our duty, [—as Wieland says
in his 'Wintermärchen']

Sunday, 11 a.m. The messenger with the skates has not yet come; a thousand curses have gone out to meet him, and we have meantime been creeping and crawling about the place . . .

The morning sun was delightful. I went with Bertuch down some steps in the rock to a spring with breeding boxes for fish; the icicles hanging from the rocks! The messenger has come, and now we are off to the ice. My best wishes, my good lord, for the morning and for mid-day too. He has forgotten the skates! I stamped and cursed and stood sulking at the window for a quarter of an hour. Now they are consoling me with the hope of another messenger to follow. So I must go to dinner with no skating . . . 4 p.m. They have come; I've been on the ice and feel happy.

Christmas Day, 8 a.m. Slept quite a long time. The sun's already up. Yesterday evening was frittered away with dice and cards.

Tuesday, 26th December, 6 p.m. The whole of to-day too. Rode to Bürgel. The bailiff's house is a fine building. Would make a

good summer ride for your Highness some day. And Waldeck forest is very fine. It is a pleasure to see woods in such a good condition . . .

Got hold of an 'Odyssey' at last. After dinner we let our imagination go and romped about as Rugantino and Basco from my 'Claudine', picturing ourselves just such rogues and vagrants, and dressing up to make it more real. Kraus had joined us and in Bertuch's white laced coat and an old wig of the ranger's he looked like a down-at-heel provincial clerk; Einsiedel in my tail-coat with the narrow blue collar was like a bankrupt young gambler, and I in Kalb's blue coat with the yellow buttons, red collar and crosswise tassels, and a moustache, looked like an arch-ruffian.

56 To HERDER

*Stetten nr. Erfurt,
2nd January 1776.*

I can give you some hope to-day, though I couldn't two days ago. So I'm doing it at once, for your wife's sake, not for yours. I am here with Wieland among kindly people. You must help him too with his 'Merkur', his income and the happiness of his children depend on this [periodical]. He wishes you would come, it was his idea first rather than mine. But he doesn't know the present plans. I hope you will get the post through me alone and by the Duke's own choice. [Dalberg], the Stadthalter of Erfurt, recommended you strongly, praising your capacity and energy to the young Duke. And I vouched for your diplomacy in Church matters, for he doesn't want the clergy to bother him about orthodoxy and the devil. Bahrtdt and his kind have brought people like you into bad odour. I want you for my Duke and him for you. It will do you both good and—my dear brother, I must settle this before I leave. Farewell. I'll let you know how matters go on. Destroy my notes as I do yours conscientiously.

57 To Fräulein FAHLMER

*Weimar,
14th February 1776.*

Dear Aunt, I don't hear from you, nor you from me, but you must pick up a good deal at Frau Aja's,* and I thought you would have written kindly now and then and that we shouldn't have

* Goethe's mother called so with reference to the story of the four *Haimons-kinder* when Goethe with his three friends went to Switzerland in 1775.

grown such strangers. I am getting used to the life here, and it to me. I wish I could write to you of my inmost feelings, but I can't, so many threads cross one another, so many branches from one trunk interlace, that I couldn't give any picture unless with the aid of a diary, which I haven't kept. Herder has accepted the post of General Superintendent.

I suppose I'll stay here too and play my part as well as I can and as long as fate and I choose. Even if it's only for a year or two, it's better than the idle life at home where I can't do anything, however much I long to. Here there are a few Dukedoms for me to see. At the moment I am getting to know the country, and that is great fun. Besides it makes the Duke keen to work; and knowing him thoroughly, I feel quite easy about a number of things. I have a delightful homely life with Wieland, and dine and sup with him when I'm not at Court. The girls here are very pretty and charming; I'm on good terms with them all. Frau von Stein is sublime; I am as it were tacked and fastened to her. With [the Duchess] Louise I exchange only looks and monosyllables; now and always she is an angel. I enjoy myself thoroughly with the Dowager-Duchess, and sometimes we share all sorts of jokes and fun. You'd be surprised what a number of good people and clever heads we have here; we are loyal, get on famously together, bring each other into verses, and keep off the Court. As soon as you can, send me some of those ladies' feathers, big, you know, like cocks' combs, two pink and three white, the best you can find; and the price. I'll send the money directly. Fritz * and all my friends are complaining of me!

58 To Frau CHARLOTTE VON STEIN†

*Weimar,
March 1776.*

I flower for you through frost and snow, like my love through the ice and storms of life. I may come to-day. I am well and at peace, and I believe I love you much more than ever before—a thought that strikes me anew every single day.

59 To Frau VON STEIN

*24th March 1766,
7 p.m.*

Adieu once more—I can see, dear Lady, that loving you is like

* Friedrich Jacobi.

† Wife of Josias Freiherr von Stein.

casting seed into the ground; it sprouts unseen, springs up and there it stands—And God give His blessing to it—Amen.

60 To Fräulein FAHLMER*

*Weimar,
10th April 1776.*

Dear Aunt, God reward you for everything. I'm quite well again. N.B., needed a dozen good, really large Holland handkerchiefs and a pair of best cuffs, have enough of the middling kind. Farewell, best wishes.

No more of Lili. I have done with her. I have long loathed her set. That's what finished it. Devil take them! Poor soul, I'm sorry for her, born into that crew. Adieu, Aunt, you are a dear, unchanging soul! Love to Fritz†. There'll be a letter from me soon for Father, a noble composition.

61 To C. M. WIELAND‡

*Weimar,
14th April 1776.*

A kind of transmigration of souls is the only explanation I can find for the meaning this woman has for me—the power she has over me. Yes surely, once we were man and wife! Now we know one another—darkly, like spirits. I can find no names for us—the past—the future—all—.

62 To CARL AUGUST

*Ilmenau,
4th May 1776.*

I am writing this in the bailiff's house at Ilmenau on Saturday morning at eleven, just to let you know at once how I have got on. I rode here in less than six hours, that's about the usual time. Towards the end the Hussar's horse wouldn't get on, and after Buchenloh neither would mine. Then I was caught in a very sharp drizzle coming from the woods, but I got safely here at last, covered with mud. The blaze had died down long before, as you must have heard from my messenger at seven. I must speak highly of the

* Goethe's social success in Weimar seems to have led the Schönemann family to try to bring Lili and Goethe together again.

† Friedrich Jacobi.

‡ About Frau von Stein.

precautions taken by those in charge, just as they praised the willingness and perseverance of their men. They saved one alley with dry shingle roofs, with a great deal of trouble, and so preserved the upper part of the town, the Offices and the Town-Hall. Only small houses and poor people have suffered, though they have saved a little; miners, linen-weavers and labourers.

You have no doubt seen the report of the robbery. They searched but found nothing—the six hussars arrived to-day about eleven, combing the Arnstadt district. They go on to Frauenwald to-morrow I'm going too. Tales are told about the devil, naked women, threats to people in Frauenwald. They say there are four lean fellows, one of them in a red coat, and a scholar from Schleusingen too; they're supposed to have caught one in Eisfeld; that of course may be like most rumours.

And now I would like to give you a lecture! I was thinking on my way about how over-zealous you are in matters like this, so that you are always doing something at least unnecessary if not wrong; you strain your own and others' powers to no purpose. That's why I asked Staff and Wedel to stay with you, for I'm here mainly to give you news and to learn, rather than to be useful. I'm taking the opportunity to gather information. It was sad to see the old furnaces at the mines. But the countryside is magnificent, really magnificent.

N.B. There were 19 hoses here and the neighbours gave help faithfully. Do live quietly as far as you can, as an *homme de lettres* and a private gentleman. Take care of your hip in this weather; it's been snowing here the whole morning. Addio. My respects to Chère Mama. Think kindly about me.

63 To Countess STOLBERG

Weimar,
17th-24th May 1776,
17th May 8 o'clock

Good morning, Gustchen! Just that, to start a diary for you. You are still interested in the unstable creature who has had some strange experiences since he stopped writing to you about himself. I feel I can't say everything, so I'd rather say nothing. Adieu.

In the garden, Gustchen dear, about 10. I have a dear little garden outside the town in the lovely meadows by the Ilm. Am having a little old house there put in order for me. It's all blossom and bird-song. And you, Gustchen, you're ill!—

18th May.

I couldn't write any more yesterday. The Captain of the Hussars came to my garden. I rode to the castle of Belvedere about eleven; in the garden behind it I am setting up a hermitage with little secluded bits for poor invalids and sad hearts. I dined with the Duke and then went to see Frau von Stein, an angel of a woman; Just ask your brothers. She has often calmed me, and I owe her moments of purest bliss. I have not told her yet about you; that has cost me much, but I'll do it to-day, I'll say a thousand things about Gustchen. We took a walk in my garden, her husband, her children, her brother and two girls called Ilten. Others joined us, we walked on, met the Dowager-Duchess and the Prince who came with us. It was very pleasant. I left the others and went to see the Duke for a moment and later supped with Frau von Stein. Now it's another beautiful calm day. That's all for now. Half past eight.

In my garden, mid-day. I am listening to the birds and making sketches for turf-seats I am having put here. I feel I want to let peace flow over me again so as to be able to bear and suffer once more. Gustchen, if I could only tell you about my position. The best I could have wished for myself, the happiest and yet— When I was younger and all these thousands of emotions stormed in on the unstable creature, I always used to ask myself: What does fate mean with me, sending me through every school? It must mean (to place me where the ordinary torments of mankind can no longer assail me. And even yet I look upon everything as a kind of preparation.) I've stroked that through because it sounds obscure and vague. More after dinner.

*Saturday 10 p.m.
in my garden.*

I have sent my man, Philipp, home and mean to sleep here alone for the first time. And to consecrate my sleep by writing to you. The masons worked till night-fall; I wanted to have them out of the house, wanted to—oh, I can't tell you all the details. The Dowager-Duchess and the Prince were here the whole afternoon, in high spirits. When they'd all gone, I potted about my own house a bit, ate some cold meat and chatted with Philipp (get your brothers to tell you about him) of his own world and mine. I felt peaceful and still do, and I hope for good sleep and a delicious awakening. Good-night, my dear—it's nearly eleven. I have sat

on and sketched an English garden. It's a glorious feeling sitting out here alone quite in the open. Lovely early morning. It is all so quiet. All I hear is my watch ticking and the wind and from far away the weir. Good-night.

Sunday, 19th, early.

Good-morning! A cloudy day, but magnificent. I slept a long time. Woke about four, though; all that green was so beautiful to the eye still half drunk with sleep. Drowsed off again.

10 o'clock at night.

In the garden, of course. Went into town this morning about eleven, got into respectable clothes, paid a visit, called on the Duke and for a minute or two on the Dowager-Duchess. We have some Italians here, getting us fine plaster casts from antiques. Then dinner at Frau von Stein's. We enjoyed teasing each other. At 4 o'clock to Wieland's, the painter Kraus joined us in the garden. Then they both came back with me to my garden. When they left I read Guibert's 'Tactique'; the Duke came and so did the Prince and two other kindred spirits. We chatted and did this and that. Frau von Stein walked down from Ober-Weimar with her mother; we went back with them, came here again, and then the Prince left us. I told the Duke of one of my friends and the story of his odd progress through life; then I went with the Duke into town and came back alone. That's my day, faithfully told. Dear Gustchen! I have been thinking such a lot that I just can't tell it all straight off.

Monday, 20th.

Delicious morning. Workmen in my garden. All sorts of things to do! - - -

Dined with the Dowager-Duchess. Then we all went to Tiefurt where the Prince has had a farm very well laid out. The peasants received him with music, a salute, rustic triumphal arches, garlands, cakes, dancing, fireworks, serenades and so on. We enjoyed it all and I was lucky and saw everything very well. Now I'm in my garden. Fumbled about for the last quarter of an hour for my tinder and got cross, but now I'm so glad to have light to write to you by. I saw a great deal of light over in the castle as I was trying to get a single spark; and yet I knew the Duke would gladly

have changed with me if he could have known it at the moment. He's a remarkable creature already, and please God some day good wine will come of the fermenting process within him. Fritz will enjoy his time with us, though I can't promise him it will be Paradise. Good-night.

I have a great favour to ask you. My sister, like you, has had nothing from me for a long time. She's fussing for news or something, to-day again. Do send her this letter and write to her. If only there were a friendship between you! If only a ray from you could light up her loneliness, and some word of comfort come back to you in some hour of need. Do get to know each other. Be to each other what I cannot be to either of you. No really good woman ought to love one of us men; we're not worthy of it. Good-night. Half-past ten.

21st May.

Got up at six, a marvellous cool summer morning. Workmen in the garden. A keeper brought me a young fox.

*Wednesday, 22nd,
about ten.*

At Tiefert again yesterday. The Duchess was there. The Duke and a few others stayed the night; this morning early we rode back here to see the Hussars manoeuvre, and I'm in my garden again now.

*Friday, 24th May,
In town, 11 a.m.*

Gone through a great deal meanwhile. On Wednesday afternoon fire broke out near Hatzfeld, five hours' ride from here. The Duke rode out, but by the time we got there the whole village had collapsed. All we could do was to save something here and there, and the school and the church. It was a sight indeed. I stood on the wall of a house; its roof had fallen in and our hoses could only save the lower parts. Behind and before and beside me, Gustchen see, there was a fine glow, not flame but a deep hollow-eyed glow from the houses that had collapsed, and the wind racing over it, and here and there a flame springing up, and the magnificent old trees round the village glowing within their hollow trunks, and the red smoke in the night, and the stars red, and the new moon hiding in

clouds. We didn't get home till two in the morning. Yesterday, Thursday, the 23rd, there were strange ideas astir in my head once more. What will happen? I have still a great deal to go through that's what I felt in all the trials of my youth, but I am steeled and mean to hold out to the end. Adieu. You'll not hear from me for a while now, but if you should feel like writing, please do. Fritz is to come whenever he wishes; the Duke likes him and wants him the sooner the better, but he doesn't wish to press him. Adieu. Ever the same Goethe.

My sister's address: Frau Hofrat Schlosser, Rheinhausen, near Emmendingen im Breisgau.

64 To KLOPSTOCK*

*Weimar,
21st May 1776.*

Spare us such letters in future, my good Klopstock! They do no good and only distress us for a short while.

You yourself must feel I can make no answer. I should have to recite a *pater peccavi* like a schoolboy, or make excuses like a sophist or else defend myself like an honest man—and it might turn out a mixture of all three; anyhow, what's the use?

So not a word more between us on this topic! Believe me, I should not have a single minute left, if I were to answer all such letters and warnings. It hurt the Duke for a moment that this one came from Klopstock. He loves and respects you. You know and feel I do so too.—Certainly, let Count Stolberg come. We are not worse and please God we are better than when he saw us.

65 To Frau VON STEIN

*In the Herrmann's Cave,
22nd July 1776.*

I have begun a sketch on the other side of this, but it's no good; better to write from my beloved cave; I would like to rest and remain here. Dearest, I have done a lot of sketching, but it is only too clear to me that I shall never make an artist. Love gives me everything, and where there is no love, it's like thrashing straw, not corn. I can't do a picturesque scene, and a perfectly ordinary one comes out friendly and charming. It is raining hard in the thick woods. If you could only be here, it is beyond any description and

* In answer to his warning about the Duke's and Goethe's way of life.

any sketch. I have made a good many sketches since I came here—all rather childish, alas, from eye to hand, without passing through the heart, so there is very little to show for it. It is always true, what makes the poet, the artist, the man, is to limit oneself, really to need, to love, to cling to one or a few objects, to see them from all sides and to become one with them.

Addio. I will take a look at the cliffs and pines. It's still raining. . .

66 To HERDER

Ilmenau,
9th August 1776.

My dear brother, here we are at Ilmenau. We've spent the last three weeks in the Thüringer Wald, and I have been living in ravines, caves, forests, ponds, under waterfalls, even among the gnomes—feasting as it were, on God's world. Don't worry, brother, I'll deal with all the queries about your coming, just suit yourself. In the meantime your house will have stopped smelling of paint. We too, have put various things in order, and we shall both meet new and whole. I have Frau von Stein, angel that she is, back again; she came back to Weimar by Meiningen and Ilmenau. For a whole day my gaze never left her eyes, and my heart, hard as any gnome's, thawed once again. Adieu . . .

67 To J. H. MERCK*

Weimar,
22nd November 1776.

I have written to-day to Bölling to pay you the 400 florins. I should be glad if you could wait till New Year for the rest, but if not, let me know, and I will see what I can do. Do get hold of some wine, as good as the first '53, so that I have some when this is finished, a keg, or a half.

I am distressed at your state, for I am so entirely happy myself. I'm still living in the garden, tussling with the season; the changes of weather and worldly affairs refresh me again and again. I am neither a man of business nor a Court lady, but I make progress with both. The Duke and I grow daily more attached to each other; together each of us developing more fully; he is growing steadily

* He had lent Goethe the money for the printing of *Götz von Berlichingen* and was now himself having financial worries, and besides had just lost two of his young children.

happier, and really there's not a creature to equal him. Otherwise there's a mad set here in such a tiny place, as it were in one family; you wouldn't find the like anywhere. Adieu, my dear brother.

68 To LAVATER

*In the garden,
8th January 1777.*

I have had two parcels from you with chapters of your 'Physiognomy' . . . There are magnificent things in them, I thoroughly enjoyed them. If only the good impression had not been spoiled by your 'Lavaterism' with its breathlessness, constant emphasis, abuse, hair-splitting and beating the air.

I have crossed out the notice about what I contributed. I don't know in the least why you put it in. It's all right about the 'Dedication', that's printed now . . .

In the life I lead just now all my distant friends fade into a kind of mist. Whether it lasts or not, I have at least wholeheartedly enjoyed this topsy-turvy bit of life. Annoyance, hope, love, toil, want, adventure, boredom, hatred, absurdities, foolishness, joy, the expected and the unforeseen, the shallow and the profound—all just as the dice falls, with festivities, dances, bells, silk and tinsel—a wonderful kind of life. And amidst it all, dear Brother, I am, thanks to God, completely happy in myself and in my true aims. I have no other wishes but those that I see coming towards me on my way. I'm afraid this joy won't be yours. Farewell. Greetings to everyone.

Your 'Thirst after Christ' makes me sorry for you. You are worse off than we pagans are, for our gods do appear to us in times of need.

69 To Frau VON STEIN

3rd May 1777.

Good morning with asparagus. How did you get on yesterday? Philipp made me another omelette, and then I wrapped myself in my blue cloak, lay down in a dry corner of the balcony and dozed comfortably through thunder, lightning and rain; in fact, I didn't want to go to bed at all afterwards. If Stein is still at home, tell him I should very much like to exercise the new horse, if he would have it saddled and sent to me. Perhaps he would like to call for me himself?

I shall probably be with you for dinner, Dearest.

This whole week I've been bringing on flowers for your bouquet to-morrow.

70 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
12th June 1777.*

Out of doors! in the garden! It is only since you left that I feel I possess something and have a duty. All my other little passions, diversions and flirtations seem only hitched to the cord of my love to you that draws me through my present existence; when you are away everything seems to fall to the ground.

I was at Belvedere this morning; we caught fish and roasted them on the spot, Adelaide Waldner's maid and I; it was a splendid meal.

I'm writing on, my fingers smeared with grafting wax. I have seen to my trees and snipped off the shoots. They have been crying out for months past for this treatment, and I have always put it off. Poets and lovers make poor gardeners. Is it because the poet is a lover or because the lover is a poet? Adieu dearest! be mine always, as I am yours. Adieu my treasure.

71 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
16th June 1777.*

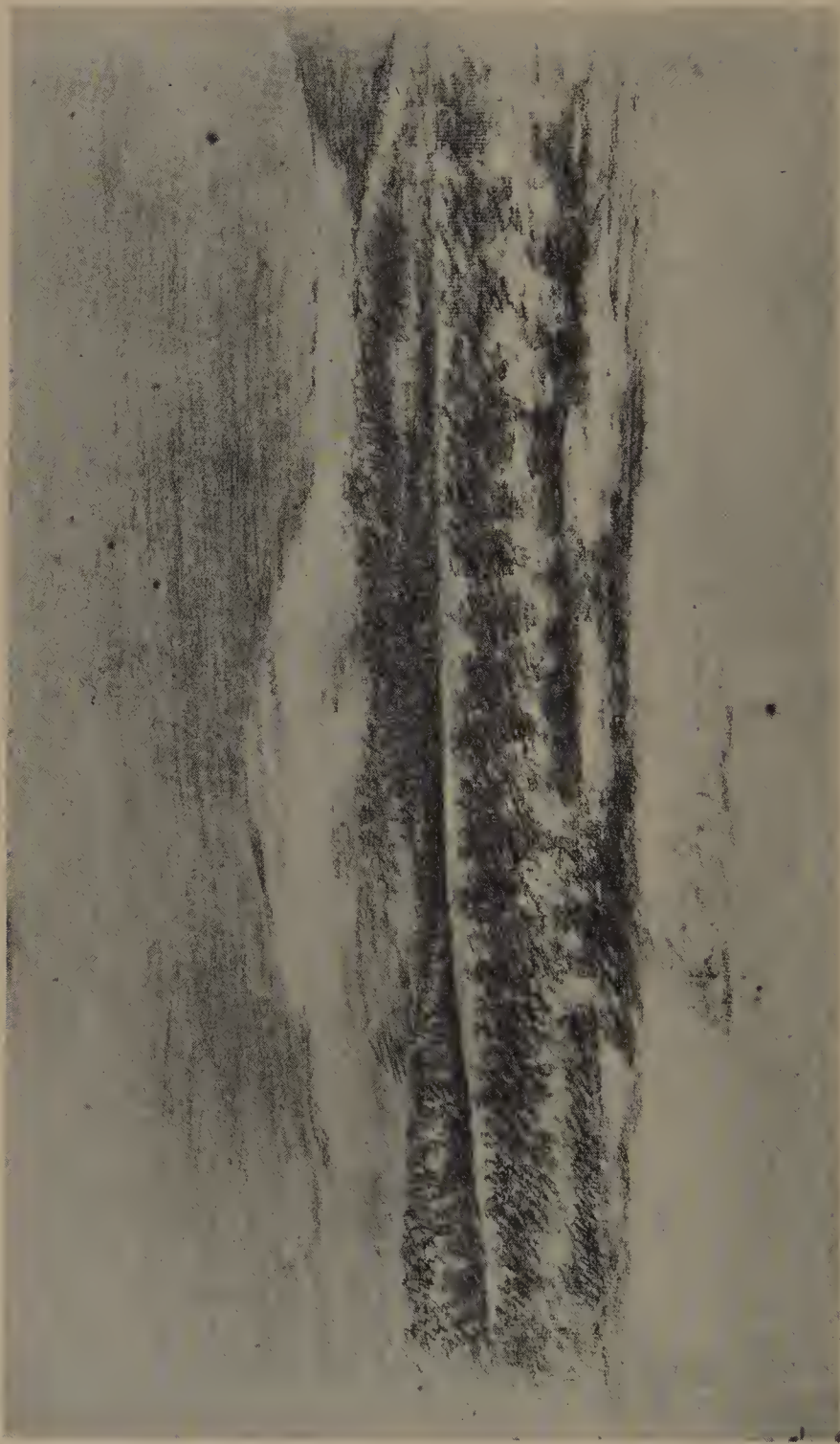
At eight o'clock I was in my garden; everything seemed perfect, and I was walking up and down, reading a little. At nine came letters with news; my sister is dead. I cannot say any more.

72 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE

*Weimar,
28th June 1777.*

All I can say is that fate always treats me the same; my sister's death is all the harder to bear for coming so suddenly at such a happy time for me. I can only feel as a man, trusting in our nature whose pangs of grief are short though its sorrows endure.

Farewell; look after Father's health, we are together only once. Kraus's drawing is ready and you'll have it soon. Adieu, my dear Mother. My greetings to poor Schlosser too.



The Brocken in Snow – drawing by Goethe

*Wartburg,
13th September 1777.*

Here I am at last, my Dearest, singing psalms to the Lord who has brought me out of sufferings and straits to height and splendour. It was the Duke's suggestion that I should come up here: I have nothing in common with the people down below—possibly very good people—nor they with me; some of them indeed imagine they like me, but it isn't true in the least. Dearest, to-night I am thinking of you down there by the moat in your valley, in the moonlight at a fire, for it is cool. Wilhelmsthal is too low and too hemmed-in for me, and yet the coolness and dampness here will keep me from the woods during the first few days.

Up here! If I could only send you this outlook, and it costs me nothing but getting up from my chair! Deep valleys, patches of meadows, copses, woods, glades and cliffs lie there in the gentle moon's soft and eerie light. The shadow of castle-rock and castle makes everything below quite black and even clings to the slopes across the valley; only the naked tips of the rocks are reddened in the moonlight. Down in the distance stretch lovely water-meadows and valleys and beyond in the dusk—Thuringia. Dearest, it is a real joy to me, though I must admit that it's a joy that has not led to anything as yet, for I am like one long in bonds, just stretching my limbs. But it is real thankfulness I feel, like a thirsty man taking a glass of water and only glancing at the sacred spring and the charm of the world around. I shall choose out a little corner to sketch if I can, just a little corner, for nature stretches too gloriously wide here on every side. But then, what little corners! Ah, one ought not to sketch or to write at all! In the meantime I wanted you just to know that I am alive and that I love you truly once more, now that I grow happy again. To comfort my loneliness I like to think that you are taking pleasure in a letter or any other scribble of mine.

*Wartburg,
14th September 1777,
Sunday, after dinner.*

Here's a thought: drawing for me is like a dummy put into a child's mouth to keep it quiet and content, thinking it is being fed.

* Written while attending the meetings of the Estates in Wilhelmstal.

This place is the most magnificent thing I have ever known, so high and happy; its sheer height and happiness would be overwhelming, were one to be more than a passing guest here.

I have been wasting paper scribbling for you the whole morning. But what poor efforts! When I think of those old masters who sat before ruins like these; like time itself they softened all outlines and changed what the crude hand of man had made, back into nature's loveliness.

God knows how hidden the paths of time and of necessity are to man and to artists. In *us* is life and - - - I know quite well what I want to say, but how can I express it?

I have just got your note of the 11th.

11.30 p.m. I have walked up here again now from town. Good-night. What a wonderful climb up to the fortress by moonlight! I said to the Duke when he visited me up here yesterday how remarkable it was that in our way of life the most fantastic things come to seem natural. A month ago, for instance, it would have sounded extraordinary to me to be living on the Wartburg, and now it is quite natural, and I feel as much at home like this as a bird in its nest.

Tuesday, 16th.

This morning everything looked quite different. Philipp woke me and I went to the window! Down there the valleys lay in one sheet of mist; it was just like a lake, with the mountains all rising from it like its banks. After that I sketched. If I don't end by ruining what I have done, you'll enjoy seeing it.

It struck me yesterday: so often I read in my diary of sketching, and yet there's no sign of it except the few things you have.

Adieu, I know you think of me, or I would not be thinking so often of you. I know you love me, I feel it because I love you so. . . .

75 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
8th November 1777.*

The trees have arrived, there are thirty of them; fine cherries and a few other fruit trees of good varieties. How and when shall they get to Kochberg? They must be carefully planted and especially protected with stout thorn-twigs from the hares.

I had strange thoughts on my way back from you yesterday; one

was, do I really love you or do I enjoy your nearness only like a mirror, so true that I can see myself in it clearly.

My next thought was that fate in transplanting me here, has done to me just what they do to the limetrees, they lop off the crown and all the well-grown boughs so that new shoots come, otherwise the trees decay from the top to the centre. But they stand there like posts of course, for the first few years. Adieu. I came upon last year's calendar, and there at the 7th November I read: 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' etc.

8th November 1777.

The trees are all for you. You will need a cart. Just make arrangements with Hauptmann. So long as it's Monday. I'll tell him where they are. I am greatly humbled by what you have added about me and the limetrees. How well a man stands in his own eyes! I spoke of what had been lost in the past, and imagined the branches were at once putting forth new shoots. Ah, and you think they are again hacked off, again no shade and no refuge there! Alas!

76 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE*

Weimar,

16th November 1777.

I can find nothing whatever to say to the strange news in your letter. For a long time my heart and my mind have been so used to being tossed about by fate that I have almost no feeling left for anything new, be it good or ill fortune. I now feel as if a tree were being planted in autumn; God give His blessing, that we may one day sit in its shade and enjoy its fruits. With my sister's death a strong root that fixed me to the earth has been hewn away, and those upper branches that were fed by it, must die off. If dear Johanna is to be a new root, giving sympathy and strength, then I too will thank the gods as you do. I am so used to saying of those near me: this is my mother, my family, etc. etc. Thank God then, on your part, for you are blessed again, and the gap in the family circle filled once more.

* Goethe had heard from his mother that his brother-in-law, Schlosser, had become engaged to Goethe's friend, Johanna Fahlmer, only four months after the death of his wife, Cornelia Goethe.

Ask Schlosser to send me Lenz's book on Stuart's 'Finance System' and his work on Law. Father can send him 'Poetas Graecos Minores' which I think is still at home . . .

This business with my teeth and swollen cheek isn't serious. There was only a small gumboil; it didn't hurt and it's almost gone again.

My household is gradually getting in order. My little hut in the garden gives me the feeling as if, amidst the seas, I were safely on board a ship.

77 To Fräulein FAHLMER

*Weimar,
16th November 1777.*

God bless you and may He give you a long life, and a happy one. It was strange to read your letter, it pleased me, though I can't get it straight yet. I have changed a good deal. I feel this specially when a voice from former times speaks to me, or I see a writing I have known well.

The fact that you can become my sister revives a pang I can never cease to feel; so forgive my tears at your happiness. May fate shield you with a motherly hand, and guard you as it does me. And may I feel with you the happiness that was denied to my poor first sister. Farewell. Give my love to Schlosser and a message to Fritz*; I have been silent so long.

78 To Frau VON STEIN

*Torfhaus and Clausthal,
10th and 11th December 1777.*

The 10th, before daybreak.

Good-morning, once more, before I leave here again.

About seven in the evening.

What shall I say of the Lord with my pen, what kind of song shall I sing to Him? At this moment all prose seems poetry to me, and all poetry prose. No tongue can tell what has happened to me; how then, shall I express it with this sharp tool? Oh, my beloved; God treats me as He treated His saints of old, and I don't know what I have done to deserve it. If I ask as a sign to strengthen my faith that the fleece be dry and the ground wet, it is so, and the other way

* Friedrich Jacobi.

round too; and above all there is the more than motherly guidance of my wishes. I have reached the goal of my desire, it hangs by many threads and many threads hang from it; you know how symbolic my existence is - - - And the humility which the gods delight to honour, and my surrender from moment to moment, and the richest fulfilment of my hopes.

I shall confess to you (tell no-one else) that my reason for coming to the Harz was that I wished to climb the Brocken.* Now, my dear one, I have been at the top of it, quite simply, although for a week everyone has been assuring me it was impossible. But how it happened, and above all why, must wait till I see you again. What wouldn't I give not to need to write now!

I told you I had a wish, for the next full moon. And now, my dear one, I have only to step outside, and there before me lies the Brocken in the glory of the full moon shining above the pines; and I have been at the summit to-day and on the Devil's Altar I offered my heartfelt thanks to my God.

I must fill in the names of the places. At the moment I am at the so-called Torfhaus, where a keeper lives, two hours from the Brocken.

Clausthal, the 11th, evening.

I came back over Altenau from the Torfhaus early this morning, and on the way I told you a great many things. Oh, I'm a talkative fellow when I am alone!

One word, not to forget it. When I arrived at the Torfhaus yesterday, the keeper was sitting in his shirt-sleeves having his morning pint. I began talking about the Brocken, and he assured me how impossible it was to make the ascent, and how often he had been at the top in summer and how foolhardy it would be to attempt it now. The mountains were hidden in mist, one saw nothing, and 'it's the same at the top', he said, 'you can't see three yards ahead at this season. And if one doesn't know all the tracks', etc. There I sat with a heavy heart, half wondering if I would go back. I felt like the king whom the prophet told to smite upon the ground and who did not smite often enough. I sat silent and prayed to the gods to turn the heart of this man and the weather, and sat there silent. Then he said to me: 'Now you can see the Brocken.' I went to the window, and there it lay before me, clear as my own face in the mirror. Then my heart leapt and I cried: 'And I am not to get

* The highest mountain of the Harz, 3735 ft.

up there! Have you no boy, nobody to —? And he said: 'I'll go with you.' I cut a sign on the window to witness my tears of joy, and I would feel it wrong to mention it, if I weren't writing to you. I did not believe it until on the highest cliff.

The mist lay below me, and above me it was marvellously clear, and all last night till an early hour, there stood the Brocken in the moonlight; and a dark mass in the dawn as I started off. Adieu. I leave here to-morrow. If you should want to write to me, give the letter to Philipp. I have given my address to him alone. Adieu, dearest. My love to Stein and Waldner, but tell no-one where I am. Adieu.

79 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
19th January 1778.

A note, to take my place. After I left you I could not sketch. There were workmen down there, and I chose a special spot where poor Christel's memory can rest hidden. What annoyed me about my idea until to-day was that it should be a place so near the path, where one could not come to pray or lovingly remember her. With Jentsch's help I hollowed out a good bit of rock from where, quite secluded, one has a view of the path she took at the end and of the spot where she died. We worked on after dark, and I then went on alone till the hour of her death; it was an evening just like that one. Orion stood as clear in the sky as he did when we came gaily riding up from Tiefurth. I have memories and thoughts enough already, and cannot leave the house again. Good-night, my angel, take care of yourself, and don't go down there. This inviting sadness is as dangerously attractive as water itself, and the reflection of the stars in the heavens which glimmers from both, draws us on. I cannot blame my lads who will now only venture across in threes; chords common to us all are now touched in them, only theirs sound a rougher note.

80 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
1st February 1778.

It really is kind of you to send stewed fruit to the man you no longer love. Many thanks for it. Though it does look as though you sent me dishes so that I shouldn't come and eat them at your house.

*Weimar,
5th August 1778.*

At the moment I find it very hard to talk about myself, but you shall have a word or two this calm evening. When I heard you were travelling in the Rhineland with the [Dowager] Duchess, I kept going along with you, for I knew how well you would get on together and how you would help the others to enjoy it all. Besides it let you pause for breath once again; and now life goes on for another stretch. Do arrange to come next spring with my mother, if you can. They suggest the winter, but that's no use. My valley grows more and more beautiful, that is to say I get still fonder of it, and others as well as myself can enjoy it more. For I keep lovingly padding and trimming all the neglected corners, taking the greatest care to put the gaps left by art into Nature's dear hand, that she, used to join everything, may strengthen and cover them. This delightful toy is a boat bearing me over the flat stretches in my existence here—while as for my inmost life, I couldn't wish for anything better.—The element I float in is just like water. It attracts a man and yet robs him of his breath, even if he only jumps into it breast-high; if he dives right in, heaven and earth seem to vanish. If he can endure it awhile and gets the feeling of the element bearing him up, and doesn't feel he is sinking, even if he barely pokes his nose out, he grows frog's limbs and facilities and learns to do wonders with a little movement. I'm planting trees at present, like the children of Israel setting up stones for a witness.

Talking of trees reminds me of your [novel] 'The Uncle'. You know I am sure to like it, but do, please, finish it off nicely . . .

I must tell you about my travels too. A trip to the Harz Mountains last winter gave me the greatest pleasure. You know I love it when the most fantastic things happen naturally, just as I hate people treating what is natural in a fantastic manner . . .

Later in the spring I was in Berlin. What a totally different scene! We were only a few days there, and I just gazed like a child at a peep-show. But you know how I live by my eyes; it gave me a thousand ideas. And I was very near old Fritz, for I saw his setting, his gold, silver, marble, monkeys, parrots and torn curtains and heard his own miserable court grumble about the great man. On our way we passed by a large part of Prince Henry's army. I dined with perhaps half a dozen generals, and seeing them there at

table—and the manoeuvres—made their war [with Austria] more real to me. Otherwise I have met nobody, and inside the borders of Prussia I have not uttered a single word they couldn't have printed. The result is I am cried down as proud, and so on . . .

82 To F. H. V. EINSIEDEL

Weimar,
1778.

Send me the Criminal Code, please, with Kressen's commentary, perhaps, and whatever else you have in that line. Something dawned on me at day break.

83 To J. F. KRAFFT*

Weimar,
2nd November 1778.

To a man struggling in the waves it must be the very bitterest blow when the helper on land hasn't the strength to save all whom the tempest drives on his shore. The man to whom the richest prize the sea could give would be his fellow men, is forced to be content with a few, leaving the rest to drown.

I don't think I am mistaken in the impression I have formed from your letters. What grieves me most is that I have neither help nor hope to offer to one whose demands are so moderate.

Many hundreds have been waiting for years by the pool so seldom troubled by any angel, and only a few can find healing. And I'm not the man to say at a certain season: Arise and walk.

Treat the little I can give you as a plank I throw to you just to gain time.

Stay where you are for the present; I will be glad to give you a little assistance later. Let me know when the money reaches you and how long you think it will last.

If a suit, overcoat, boots and warm stockings would be of use, let me know, I have enough and to spare.

Take these few drops of balm as I offer them out of the willing Samaritan's roomy medicine chest.

* An unknown man who had applied to Goethe for help.

Weimar,
11th November 1778.

This bundle contains an overcoat, boots and stockings and some money. Here's my plan for you for the winter.

Living is cheap in Jena. I will enquire about board and lodging etc. for someone who wants—I'll say—to live quietly on his small pension.

I will let you know once that's done and you can go and move in there. I will send cloth and lining and money for a coat; have it made. I will let the Rector of the University know you have been recommended to me, that you want to study quietly for some time and would like to matriculate.

Then you'll have to invent some credible tale, at all events go on calling yourself Secretary etc., matriculate at the University—and then nobody, mayor or official, will ask any more about you. I haven't sent you one of my own coats, for in Jena it might be recognised. Let me know first what you think of the idea and what you mean to call yourself.

P.S. Through some carelessness the package hasn't gone off, but this letter can still go.

So I won't send the package till I have an answer from you. Perhaps it would be best to go straight to some inn at Jena. Don't be afraid of anything there.

And get on your feet once again. We've only the one life.

I am fully aware what it means to take on another's destiny in addition to one's other burdens, but you shan't go under.

I will leave it to you. Do you want to stay at Gera until everything's arranged at Jena? *I think that's better.* So stay quietly at Gera, (but should anything happen go straight to Jena and then let me know).

Weimar,
23rd November 1778.

To-day, the 23rd, I received your two letters of the 17th and 18th November; I have already anticipated their contents as far as making careful enquiry on behalf of a person recommended to me and wanting to live simply and quietly under the protection of the University.

Be sure to stay in Gera until the answer comes. I'll send you a small parcel the day after to-morrow and write more.

You are not a burden to me; on the contrary this teaches me economy, for I fritter away a good deal of my income that I could save for those in need. And do you imagine your tears and blessings count for nothing? Anyone who has plenty, ought not to bless, he ought to give. The great and the rich of this world hand out lands and honours, but fate has compensated the needy with the power to bless, which the fortunate man is not wise enough to covet.

Perhaps you may soon be of use to me. Any man, who wants to do something good and lasting, values servants faithful in small things, not those full of plans and promises.

Don't hate us poor philanthropists for our cautious reservations; so many sordid experiences tend to rob us of our youthful good-will, courage, and optimism (which make up charity), unless we pray earnestly. It is really one of God's blessings, letting us help a genuine sufferer, for we can so seldom do anything.

Do nothing till you hear from me again. Make no arrangements with Altenburg. Write to me of any further developments. Your letters have taken very long to reach me; let me know when you get this one, sent off the 23rd November.

86 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
11th December 1778.

Your letter of 7th December reached me this morning, Friday, the 11th.

First let me reassure you. There will be no compulsion; you shall have the hundred thaler wherever you stay; but now listen to me.

I know that whatever a man imagines is real to him; you picture Jena wrongly to yourself, but I realise that this kind of morbid timidity is of all things the least likely to be reasoned away. I considered Jena for many reasons the best place for you to stay. The University and town have long lost their ancient splendour and wild ways, the students are no worse there than anywhere, and many of them are really quite fine. They are used there to so many people coming and going that a single one passes unheeded. Many people there live on scanty means, and poverty is neither noticed nor despised. And it is at least a town where it's easier to get what one needs. How miserable to be ill in winter in the country where

there is no one to nurse you. Besides, the people to whom I directed you keep a comfortable house and they would have been kind to you for my sake. Whatever happened to you, I would have been in a position to help you through someone or other. And you would have been safely settled there. I could have helped you with your arrangements; I only needed to settle about board and lodging and could have paid later. I could have given you a little at New Year and managed the rest on credit. You would have been nearer to me. I could have sent you something every market-day, and sometimes wine, food, etc.; it would have made life pleasanter for you and cost me no more, as I could have linked you up somewhat with my household. The communications with Gera are miserable, nothing arrives in time, and money is spent that does no good to anyone. You might have been half a year in Jena without a soul noticing you. This is the state of affairs that made me give the preference to Jena, and you'd do the same if you looked at the matter clearly. What about giving it a trial? But I know a midge can upset a man whose nerves are on edge, and no words are of any use.

Think it over. You would make things easier for yourself and for me too. I promise you will be well cared for in Jena. But if you absolutely cannot do it, then stay in Gera. You shall have 25 thaler at New Year, and the same every quarter, at Easter, Midsummer and Michaelmas. I can't arrange it otherwise. Just because my position makes it so easy for me to get money, I have to be specially careful over my expenses. Even what I have already given you, coming at the end of the year and quite unexpectedly, makes a hole I must somehow mend.* Please let me know how much it was; I missed writing down one item, and find there's a mistake in my accounts.

If you were in Jena I should find it easier to give you some commissions and possibly some work, get to know you personally, and so on.

But do just as you wish. If in your heart you can't agree with my arguments, if they don't convince you and promise you peace and tranquillity in Jena, then stay on quietly where you are. Make a start soon at telling me the story of your life, and send it to me in instalments. Believe me, I approve of anything that will calm and content you; I only chose Jena because I hoped there to secure a tolerable life for you most easily and simply.

* Goethe's salary was 1200 thaler.

Your Highness, H.M. the King of Prussia sets out in his answer such grounds as he considers should induce your Highness to allow his request to recruit within your territories; he appears to presume that General Möllendorf will be consulted and some arrangements be made. Everything considered, this leaves us no choice but to make an early and definite decision which side we are to take and how we are then to act. The best thing seems to be simply to compare the two unpleasant aspects of the present situation. We then have to contrast the two possible lines of action and to reflect on the consequences of each, as far as our impartial but necessarily limited view allows us to see into the future.

Suppose we agree to the King's demand; this may mean either allowing him to recruit, or fixing with General Möllendorf on a certain number of men to be sent, either selected by the Prussians or recruited by us and drafted into their service.

If we choose the first of these alternatives, these dangerous people will gain a footing and take root here; they will do their utmost to attract the best young levies, they will use both cunning and secret force to remove a large number of them, and they will even not scruple to undermine the loyalty of your Highness's soldiers.

Or suppose we agree with General Möllendorf on a certain number, giving him lists of the men to be taken from each district. There would be no guarantee that things would stop there. Some young men who notice what is going on will elude the Prussians, who will seize on others instead, quarrels will start and the Prussians will take this as an excuse for overstepping the arrangements.

Finally, suppose we decide to make our own selection and draft the men to the Prussians; that represents the least general evil, but it remains an odious, hated and shameful traffic. And even with all this we are unlikely to be at the end of our troubles. These men handed forcibly over to foreigners will quickly desert and come back to their own country. The Prussians will demand their return and will take others in their place if they are missing, deserters or in hiding. This curse will happen every autumn. If the Prussians are granted one levy they certainly will not be satisfied but renew their demands every spring.

On the other hand there is bound to be offence on the Emperor's side at this step however reluctantly taken. It will never be believed

that we took this decision perforce and so unwillingly. It will revive the old suspicion that the Courts of Saxony have little liking for the House of Austria; the Imperial Court will not lack opportunities to vex Saxe-Weimar. The first thing to be feared is that Austria will also demand the right to recruit within your Highness's territories, and there will then be pressure from both sides and the vexations enumerated above will be doubled or even trebled; for Austria then may not choose to act with the consideration we might at least hope for from Prussia if we make an agreement with them.

But suppose that to avoid this evil we take the other side and do not accept the reasons the King gives in support of his proposal; then the following measures will be necessary.

For the present we might say nothing and wait to see what General Möllendorf demands either in writing or by sending an officer, as he has not yet replied to our last communication. The latest news of him is that he has returned with his corps to Bohemia; Lt. Rheinbaben has left and Lt. Monteton is not likely to arrive back before the end of the month. This gives us a short respite and it would be well to use it.

The first step will be to write to Hanover, Mainz, Gotha and the other Courts of Saxony, stating these facts: In the present circumstances it is your Highness's duty, intention and wish to protect his lands and subjects as far as possible from the hardships of the neighbouring war and not to participate in the affairs of the Empire except together with its other States. Your Highness has no doubt that the same opinion is held at every Court, and it is, therefore, all the more regrettable that, despite this unanimity of conviction, it has so far been impossible to fix on any common plan of action. The demand that Prussia makes to recruit within this Duchy has now led your Highness to wish still more earnestly for a closer bond with the other Princes, and to propose fresh consideration of so vital a union. Your Highness is not in a position firmly to refuse this demand made by Prussia should it be followed up, and is therefore all the more ardent in desiring a union with his friendly fellow-rulers whose lands might be subjected to these or similar trials—so that he may be able to oppose such demands more firmly.

This step can be taken at once in any case, however we decide to act in the main issue, and it is sure to have a good effect, if not a sufficient one. Anything else would also be welcome that would rouse the Princes of the Empire from their inaction, and it would

be a fortunate thing should this event lead through sheer necessity to a swifter union.

But the main decision will not wait upon these replies, as it is in the nature of things that these should not be decisive.

Should we determine, then, to resist the King of Prussia, we must be prepared before many days are past to see a recruiting officer and his detachment appear with or without warning. We may answer either him and the general who sent him thus: Despite the King's announcement, recruitment has not been sanctioned here, and we may demand the officer's withdrawal from the Duchy. If so, it will be well to reflect and determine in advance whether, if he refuses, he is to be arrested and ejected and how far force should go if he resists. These things are hard to decide in advance, but they must be thought over for they can be foreseen. And in such situations impromptu decisions seldom include thought of the consequences.

If we have decided, then, to get rid in this way of the first—weaker—emissary of the King of Prussia, the new problem arises, what can or has to be done if more return in greater force?

It is fairly safe to presume that the Prussians will not let matters come to any unpleasant public incident. If they see themselves stoutly resisted, they might be content with unobtrusive provocation and some harm done here and there. But the King might be driven by his present lack of men to overstep the consideration that in his own interest he shows to the Princes. He is quite aware that all these things can be drowned in the din of war and lost in the other much more important events that affect more parties.

Should it come to this, he would send back his ejected recruiting officer with a greater force, like a punitive expedition, and quarter troops everywhere; and these would have to be kept at the country's expense. A troop like this must lead to disorder, and under its protection all the evils of recruitment would mount and spread, and then the Prussians' desire for revenge would put an end to all moderation, and banish all hope of an agreement. They would then use open force to take away useful, married, established people, and your Highness would be unable to protect his subjects from extortion and injustice.

The only remaining course would then be to appeal to the Reichstag; but in the present circumstances one can look for nothing there but empty sympathy, while the good relationship to the Royal House of Prussia would easily be disturbed by urgent and bitter complaint.

*Weimar,
14th February 1779.*

Here's a Good-night and two flower-buds. The young monkeys will have told you of our morning. I have been brooding about my 'Iphigenie' the whole day long, and now my head is in a whirl, though—as a preparation!—I slept a good ten hours last night. Like this, without any concentration, with only one foot in Pegasus' stirrup, it will be extremely difficult not just to produce something draped in cheap stuff. Good-night, dearest. I have sent for music to soothe the soul and set the spirits free.

*Weimar,
22nd February 1779,
evening.*

The soft tones of the music are gradually freeing my spirits from protocols and acts. There is a quartet in my green room; I sit next door and quietly summon the far-away images. I feel a scene is going to detach itself to-day, so I don't think I shall come. Good-night. I have got such a dear, good letter from my mother.

*Apolda,
6th March 1779.*

The temptation to come to Weimar has been with me the whole day; it would have given me such pleasure, had you come here. But people who live at Court haven't that kind of spirited enterprise. Remember me to the Duke and say I ask him to deal gently for the moment with the recruits when they come for training. There is little pleasure in the recruiting business, for the lame would willingly serve and the strapping fellows mostly pretend to some lawful hindrance.

But there's one comfort; my chief file-leader (over 11 inches [above the average]) is willing to come and his father gives his blessing. My play is making no progress here; it's devilish; the King of Tauris has to speak as if no stocking-weaver in Apolda were starving.

Good-night, dear one. A Hussar is just leaving.

*Buttstaedt,
8th March 1779.
At the Townhall.*

While the young men are being measured and inspected I will write a few words. Up till now I have always been used to taking everything in this world singly and studying it; so it seems most odd to me now to classify every young man in the country by the physiognomy of army measures! But I must say there's nothing more worth while than pottering about in this sort of thing oneself; looking in from above, one gets a wrong view. Everything happens in such a simple, human way that one has to keep a simple, human outlook to be of any use at all.

I let them tell me all kinds of things and then keep climbing to my old stronghold of poetry for another short spell at my little daughter ['Iphigenia']. But I see at the same time that I am treating this gift of the gods rather too cavalierly, and it is high time I was more economical with my talent if I'm ever to achieve anything more.

I'd like to have come to Weimar the day before yesterday, but rather feared the distraction.

Give your daughter time; after all, the little soul is only a month old. It is from circumstances that we learn, and do what we may, we cannot alter these. Never let the child lack your fatherly care, so that we may bring her up in good health. We shall have plenty of opportunity for thinking and speaking about her by the time she understands what's said to her.

God give Weimar peace within and without; then much may be done for you and your country.

I have noticed all sorts of things to tell you; both funny and serious.

Knebel has just found me writing this; he's been very amusing.

Farewell. He will tell you more. I'm off to Allstädt in the morning.

26th April 1779.

I wish, Sir, that you had responded to my communication last year and indicated the obstacles that you considered stood in the

* Manager of the money affairs of the family of Goethe's late friend Lt. Lindau, adoptive father of a young boy whom he had met when travelling in Switzerland.



Charlotte von Stein – self portrait

way of satisfying Herr von Salis and paying the legacy to me. Had you done so, I have no doubt this matter would by now have reached a satisfactory conclusion. Permit me hereunder to recapitulate some already known circumstances, in order to outline and rectify certain facts.

My late friend [Herr von Lindau] removed Peter im Baumgarten from the care of his mother. He intended and undertook to give the boy a good education, enable him to earn his living and use his abilities to make his way in the world. He therefore brought him to Marschlins and put him there in the charge of Herr von Salis . . . [Before he went to America] he asked his sisters who remained in Europe that in the event of his death they should pay Herr von Salis as the boy's foster-father 2000 thaler to be spent on the boy's education (after deduction of any yearly payments already made to him for this purpose).

My late friend's sisters were generous enough to recognise this request, hardly binding in law, and to acknowledge Peter im Baumgarten as the legatee. Had the boy remained at Marschlins with Herr von Salis, then in express accordance with the deceased's wish this legacy would have been paid to Herr von Salis to lighten the burden of education and not to the boy's parents, then alive. It was Herr von Salis's place, and neither the parent's nor anyone else's to renounce any outstanding claims and to draw up a valid acknowledgement. The circumstances have in no way altered, except that after certain events I have taken charge of the boy. Herr von Salis, therefore, claims only what was already owing to him for the boy, and duly assigns the payment—through you, Sir—of the remaining legacy to me.

Before his departure my late friend repeatedly and urgently recommended this boy to my care, almost as if he had foreseen what, in spite of his anxious providence, would happen to the child after his death. Love for him led me—two years ago—to take the boy into my own household and to look after him myself, as far as my circumstances allow. On express assurances from Frau von Lindau of Woumen and from yourself, Sir, that the above legacy would very shortly be paid to me, I increased my outlay for the boy. During this period I alone have kept him, paid the necessary teachers, given him several suits of clothing. At present he is in Ilmenau, learning to be a gamekeeper, and I have been obliged to pay increasing quarterly sums for him. I have advanced all this out of my own pocket. I could not take anything from the late

Lindau's other friends, to whom he also recommended the boy and who indicated their willingness to contribute something; for I considered it wrong that my late friend's protégé whom he had cared for himself should live by the favour of others. Who then is the boy's guardian if I am not? Herr von Salis recognises me as his successor and assigns the legacy to me. I have fulfilled the wishes of my late friend in every particular and cannot see how the mother—at such a distance—should in any way be drawn into this affair.

I can, however, in no respect blame you, Sir, for wishing to settle this business as safely as possible. I have, therefore, asked an eminent lawyer here in Weimar for his opinion, which you will see set forth in the enclosed Memoir. I request that you will do the same and I doubt if anyone will express any other views than that the money should be paid to me and that a receipt for it drawn up by me should be perfectly sufficient both for you, Sir, and for the sisters of the testator . . .

Whatever your decision, I trust, Sir, that you will make me a speedy reply, so that the boy's best years may not be in any way wasted against the wishes of the late Lindau and of his generous sisters. For although I shall continue to see to it that he lacks nothing essential, I am obliged to withhold from him some things that would be of use to him.

I am fully persuaded that this explanation will remove all obstacles and I remain, Sir, . . .

93 To Frau VON STEIN

Tiefurth,
12th May 1779.

I simply cannot stay away from you. I am like a bit of wood washed round and round in one spot on a lake; it's no use my wanting the water to flow on. I am sending you flowers and some fruit. Knebel is reading Pindar, the Duke is going riding, and I shall stay here. Eat my asparagus and think of me. Adieu.

94 To KRAFFT*

Weimar,
22nd May 1779.

Please be careful with the small sums I am able to send. At the end of June I will send you money for board and lodging and

* In Ilmenau.

something over. I hope you are quite happy there in the mountains. I will send some books, but I have to borrow them myself, so please send them back soon, carefully packed. I have told the courier always to call and ask if you have anything for me. I will speak at once to the newly appointed Amtmann about you. Captain Castrop knows no more than the others do about you, and nothing at all of your connection with me. I only told him your money passed through my hands and that's why I settled about your board and lodging. He is a pleasant, obliging person; he will soon call on you; he is in charge of the roads and has been a diligent, honest worker for me since I have been put at the head of the Army and Road Departments. Do write down some more anecdotes from your life, if you feel sufficiently at ease. Deal in turn with the things you have noticed in different places. It's a relaxation for you and it gives me pleasure. Young Dr Scherf is a clever doctor, it might be a good thing to consult him from time to time; if you like, I'll give you a recommendation.

95 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
13th July 1779.

I am very pleased Castrop has adjusted the arrangement like this and you have now only the Hoes to deal with. They ask a hundred thaler a year, and I'll guarantee them twenty-five thaler quarterly and see that by the end of July you get a certain sum of pocket-money. I will send what I can in kind, too, paper, pens, sealing-wax, etc. Meantime here are some books; please use this list for returning them.

Thanks for your story, go on with it. It is a proud and daring thing to wish to do good; one should be very grateful to be allowed to do even a little.

And now I have a suggestion to make. Once you are settled in your new quarters, I should like you to get in touch with a boy learning to be a gamekeeper in Ilmenau, for whose training I have made myself responsible. His name is Peter im Baumgarten. He knows a little French—do help him with that. He draws well—please keep him at it. I'd like to fix times for him to come to you. You could relieve me of the concern I often feel about him, if you could have some friendly talk with him, find out and let me know something of his disposition and keep an eye on how he does. It all

depends on whether you like that kind of job; for my own part I feel cheerful and young in children's company. Let me know, and I can give you further directions. You would be doing me a considerable service and I should be able to add to your monthly allowance part of the boy's education-money.

I should like to be able to clear your worries gradually and keep you constantly cheerful.

What you sent via Erfurt has arrived safely, the other packages also with seals intact.

Here is a contract in duplicate for you to exchange with Rieth. That will keep you from dire need for the next year, and I beg you to calm yourself as far as possible, and to trust I am glad to do what I can for you by degrees. I have added my guarantee to the contract; sign it at the pencilled \times , and give it to Rieth.

96 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE

Weimar,

9th August 1779.

Up till now I have had to control my longing to see you again because my presence here was more or less necessary. Now, however, there is a chance; but please keep it a strict secret. The Duke wants to spend the fine autumn weather in the Rhineland; I am to go with him, and Chamberlain Wedel too. We plan to come to you for a few days to avoid the bustle of the Fair, and then go on by water. After that we should come back, make our headquarters with you and visit the neighbourhood. Whether you take this as common prose or as poetry—for your past life it really is as it were the 'dot on the i'; for the first time I should be coming home in good health and spirits and with all possible honour. But seeing the vines upon the mountains of Samaria have done so well, let us hear the tabrets too! *

I want nothing in other words but for you and Father to be ready to receive us gladly, thanking God to see your son thus in his thirtieth year. I have withstood every temptation to steal off from here and take you by surprise, so I want to enjoy this visit to the full. I don't expect what is impossible; God did not grant it to Father to enjoy the fruits which he longed for so greatly, now they

* This refers to Jeremiah 31.5, which comforted Goethe's mother when he was critically ill in December 1768.

are ripe; He has spoiled his appetite; well, so be it. I ask no more from Father than what the moment may suggest to him. But as for you, I should like to see you really gay, to greet you even better than ever before. I have all one could want—a life where I find myself daily tried and daily grow. This time I am coming back in good health, not passionate, not confused, not dully drifting. I am coming back like some favourite of the gods who, now half his days are over, hopes the suffering of the past will turn to future good, and who has steeled himself against any ills to come. If I find you happy, I shall gladly go back to the work and the day's toil that await me. Do answer all this soon. We should be with you by mid-September. Once I have your answer, I'll let you know more, down to the last detail. But in the meantime it must be a close secret, even from Father, Merck, Bölling, etc. Our arrival must come as a surprise to them all. I am counting on it. Nobody suspects a thing here as yet.

If you just let me know what you think. I will write to you in my next letter all about my ideas for our quarters, what we need and so on.

97 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE

*Weimar,
Mid-August 1779.*

My dear Mother, your answer was just what I wanted; everything is bound to go off easily and be grand. Here are more details about our arrival. We shall arrive about the middle of September and spend a few days very quietly with you. The Duke doesn't want to see his aunts and cousins who will be at the Fair, so we shall leave directly and drift down the Main and Rhine. Once our tour is over, we shall come back and officially take up residence with you, and then I will meet all my friends and acquaintances, while the Duke goes to Darmstadt and visits some other titled people in the neighbourhood. We shall need the following quarters: the Duke will have his bed in the little room, the organ must be removed if it is still there. He will receive in the large room that leads to his own. He sleeps on a clean straw-mattress, with a good linen sheet over it, and has one light blanket.

There's a blot on the paper, so I'll go on here.

The little room with the fireplace will have to be got ready for his attendants and a camp-bed put in.

For Herr von Wedel there will be the back Grey Room with a camp-bed too, etc.

Upstairs in my old room a straw mattress etc. like the Duke's, for me too.

Please arrange dinner for four in the afternoon; just an ordinary dinner, with no elaborations, just your own, good domestic cooking-masterpieces. It will be good if you can get some fruit for the early morning.

So it amounts to this, that when we come first, we want to take everyone by surprise; a few days should go by before people notice we are there; at Fair-time that's easy enough. Take all the chandeliers out of the Duke's room; he'll think them funny. You can leave the sconces. Otherwise everything as usual, spick and span, and the less apparent fuss, the better. It must seem to you as though we had been living ten years in your house. Upstairs in the attic see there is a place or two for the servants, near ours. Put out your silver things for the Duke's use, basin, candlesticks etc.; no coffee, he never drinks that sort of thing. You will like Wedel; he's better than any of us men you have yet seen.

Strict silence, then. Nobody here knows a thing. Ask me about anything that occurs to you. I'll answer it all, so that everything is well prepared.

Merck mustn't be told yet.

98 To Frau VON STEIN*

Weimar,
21st August 1779.

I see, I must bear up a little longer, there's nothing else for it. I hoped to be with you this evening; there is a good moon which could well have guided me among your hills, and I could have returned on Monday; but that too is not to be. For the Duke has been away since yesterday, and doesn't return till to-morrow, and some things never get done the whole week, if they aren't started first thing on Monday. One hour after another is filched from the Duke, and then he is often driven to rob us of whole days.

My burden weighs on me more heavily again this week. In countries where the women carry food and other things in baskets on their heads, they have what they call 'head rolls' made of cloth stuffed with horse-hair so that the hard basket does not press on the

* In Kochberg.

skull. I feel as if this roll were sometimes removed and sometimes put back on my head. I see little of Stein, he is never at home when I call. Your pigeons can't make out at all why nobody ever opens the window. The squirrel is flourishing. Not a soul comes into my house except the fair maiden*; we get on very well together, for we are both in the same state: *my* loved-one is absent, and *her* ducal friend has gone another way.

As for others, I can see them dropping me and me dropping them. I sometimes visit Knebel; I hear nothing whatever of Herder. Meanwhile a new play is on the way, and you will be coming back. Good-night, at least in writing.

28th August.

Just a word to thank you for the purse and the cuffs. This is a beautiful day. May it bring you happiness too. Here is what I have in way of books. Remembrances to everyone.

99 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
9th September 1779.

Many thanks for what you are doing for Peter. I have the lad's case at heart, an inheritance from the unfortunate Lindau. Just go on being kind to him in any way you can. I don't mind whether he reads, works at his French, sketches etc., so long as he is doing something, and I hear how you find him and what you think of him. For the moment let a gamekeeper's work be his sole interest, let him tell you how he gets on with it, what he likes and dislikes about it, and anything else. For believe me, we all need a trade that will keep us.

It is never the artist that gets paid, it is the craftsman. Chodowiecki, the artist, whom we admire, would have had meagre fare, but Chodowiecki, the craftsman, whose copper-plates illustrate even the most miserable subject, gets paid. Don't imagine Peter has the patience and perseverance to be an artist. Now that he has to go to the forest, he wants to sketch; if he had to go to the easel, he would be longing for the woods.

I am leaving for a few weeks, so here's a small sum. Castrop is to pay the 25 thaler to Rieth.

You shall hear from me when I get back.

* Corona Schröter, the singer and actress.

We are waiting for the ferry so I shall sit in the shade and write a few words to you.

We glide like a quiet stream on and on into the world; this was a most beautiful day, and up to now we have had the good fortune we wished for. On this journey I am going over my whole past life, seeing all the old friends again, and God knows what it will all amount to in the end. The Duke is enjoying himself, Wedel is in good spirits. Switzerland lies before us and with Heaven's assistance we hope to wander about among the world's great features and to bathe our spirits in what is sublime in nature. Do keep on sending something to Frankfort, it will be sent on to me or await me there. Farewell! Here on the other side I have sketched the countryside.

Selz, Midday, 25th September.

An uncommonly beautiful day, a smiling landscape, everything still green, scarcely a yellow beech or oakleaf here and there. The willows still in their silver loveliness. A mild, welcome breath over the whole country. Grapes better with every step and day. Every cottage with a vine up to the roof, every farmhouse with a great, thickly-hung arbour. And the air—soft, warm, moist, one's soul grows ripe and sweet like the grapes. Would to God we could live here together, so we would not so easily freeze up in winter and dry up in summer. Nearby the Rhine and the clear chain of hills, the woods alternating with pastureland and garden-like fields, do one good and give me a kind of comfortable feeling I have long lacked.

Emmendingen, 28th September.

First of all I can do nothing but praise and glorify the heavenly clouds that up till now have been floating over us like a baldachin on a festival, and which have professed themselves friends and guides to our undertaking. In all humility I hope it will continue like this; the air and the barometer lead one to hope it. At night perfectly clear skies, with the dawn softly rising and falling mists, the most uplifting spectacle. Rain when we get to our lodgings, etc.

Now I shall continue my account.

On the evening of the 25th the others went on by the direct road while I made a slight detour to Sesenheim. I found there a family just as I had left them eight years before, and I was received in a

friendly and kind way. In my present state, pure and calm as air, this atmosphere of kindly, placid natures is most welcome to me. The second daughter, [Friederike], loved me in those days better than I deserved and more than others on whom I expended much passion and faithfulness; I felt obliged to leave her at a time when this almost cost her her life. She, however, passed lightly over what still remained to her of an illness of those days, and behaved in the most charming way with such a spirit of sincere friendship that it set me quite at ease from the first moment when I surprised her face to face and we almost bumped into each other at her door. I must say this of her, that never by the faintest touch did she attempt to waken a former feeling in my heart. She took me to sit in every arbour once more, and nothing could have been better. There was a glorious full moon, and I asked about everything. A neighbour who had helped us then in our artistic endeavours was called in and declared that only a week before, he had been asking about me. The barber had to be fetched too. I found old songs which I had given them, a coach I had painted; we recalled many a bit of fun in those happy days, and I found my memory among them as green as if I had been away barely six months. The parents were full of simple kindliness; they found I had grown younger. I stayed the night and left the next morning at daybreak, with friendly faces to see me off. So now I can think happily of that little corner of the world and can live in peace with those forgiving spirits.

On Sunday, 26th, I rejoined our party and we reached Strassburg about noon. I went to Lili, and found the lovely young thing, her mother beside her, playing with a seven weeks' old doll. There too I was greeted with surprise and joy. Asked about everything, looked into every corner. And I found to my delight that the dear creature is very happily married. From all I heard her husband appears to be upright, sensible and active; he is comfortably off, with a fine house, highly respectable family, a position of distinction in the town, and so on,—everything she needed, and so on. He was not at home. I stayed to lunch. After lunch accompanied the Duke to the Minster; in the evening we saw a play, *L'infante de Zamorra*, with excellent music by Paisiello. After that I returned to Lili's for supper. When I left the moonlight was beautiful. I cannot describe the exquisite sensation that remains with me. There is something heavenly in this delightful feeling of the sheer unfailing goodwill of these people, however prosaic my dealings with them now are. On the way here I recited as it were a rosary

in honour of the most true, proved and unquenchable friendship. My mind, no longer troubled by any narrow passion, can now respond to those relationships which are enduring, and my distant friends and their fate lie before me like a country which one surveys from a high mountain or like a passing bird.

Here I am now near my sister's grave. Her household is to me like a slate from which a dear image, once visible, has now been wiped. Johanna Fahlmer, who has taken her place, my brother-in-law, and some of her friends are as near to me as ever. Her children are lovely, merry and healthy.

From here we go to Basel. I do not know when you will next hear from me. From you I have heard nothing as yet, though other letters have been forwarded from Frankfort.

Adieu. Remember me to everyone.

Early on the 27th we left Strassburg and reached Emmendingen in the evening.

My greatest hope is to see Lavater and to know him close to the Duke. I am talking to you all about myself; it is my old sin. Adieu.

101 To Frau VON STEIN

*Münster,
3rd October 1779,
Sunday evening.*

Let me just jot down a few words . . .

The journey through the pass leading here left me with a feeling of restfulness. The sublime imparts a beautiful calm to the spirit; it completely fills it, makes it conscious of what it can hold; it is a pure feeling if it is welling to the rim, yet overflowing. My eye and my spirit were able to take in the objects, which become most impressive as my mind at peace gave itself up without reserve to these sensations. What a contrast to idling laboriously among trifles! We so often take great pains to feed and comfort our spirit with the mock importance we create and lend to those trifles! What a miserable make-shift!

A young man we brought with us from Basel said that now he did not feel at all as when he first was here, novelty, he said, makes all the difference. But I maintain that on seeing an object like this, the unaccustomed sight has first to enlarge our mind that it may hold the greatness of what it sees. This causes pain as well as pleasure and draws from us tears of delight. Our mind, now enlarged, is no longer capable of that first feeling, and we think this

is a loss; it is, however, a gain, for what we have lost in delight, we have gained in inner growth. If fate had only placed me in a grand region, every morning would have brought me grandeur, as my charming valley brings me patience and calm.

At the end of the ravine I dismounted and walked back a stretch alone. A new profound feeling heightened the pleasure of observation. In the darkness one seems to divine the origin and life of these strange masses. However and whenever they may have been formed, there is something great and simple in their grouping and in the weight and similarity of their parts. Whatever convulsions may since have moved, parted, split them, were but single, isolated shocks; the mere thought of such an upheaval imparts a sublime feeling of lasting stability. Time, serving timeless laws, has affected them differently at different stages.

The rocks look yellowish inside, but weathering and exposure have changed the surface to a slate colour, and the original one only shows here and there in stripes or in fresh cracks. The stone itself weathers slowly, its edges are rounded and softer parts eaten away. One gets delicately curved hollows and cavities, and these, combined with sharp facets and peaks, produce strange contours.

There is plant-life here too; pines strike root on every ledge, surface, and crevice, and moss and similar plants frame the rocks. One is profoundly conscious that here there is nothing arbitrary, that everything illustrates a slowly evolving timeless law, and that man's hand is seen only in the smooth road along which he creeps through these extraordinary regions.

102 To Frau VON STEIN

Thun,
14th October 1779.

We have got back here safely. The last four days the most beautiful weather, to-day and yesterday not a cloud in the sky; it was pure pleasure to see such wonderful country in this heavenly light. It's hard to write after all this; I'll dictate later to Philipp from my pencil scrawls.

Our remarkable tour through the Bernese glaciers is at an end; we passed through, as it were just skimming the bouquet; at some places I wished I could have smitten upon the ground once more; however, I am quite content. Had I been alone, I should have gone both higher up and lower down, but with the Duke I had to keep

to a middle course. We might however have ventured more, but for his bad habit of overdoing everything. When we have made our way with trouble and danger to the top of a mountain, he will find some new precipitous track—equally with trouble and danger and quite without rhyme or reason. I have more than once felt some inward irritation over this; I even dreamt last night I had fallen out with him about it and had left him, and used all kinds of tricks to evade those he sent after me. But all my irritation goes again when I realise that each of us has his thorn in his flesh, and see what real benefit he otherwise derives from this journey. He has an excellent way of taking notice, of showing interest and curiosity; he often puts me to shame when he is persevering and insists on seeing or finding out something, while I often forget again or am indifferent.

I think everything is going to go well, and up till now we have been unbelievably lucky. No thought, no description, no memory equals the beauty and grandeur of the objects or their charm when seen from viewpoints like these in the varied light of the different times of day.

Wedel has a hundred crazy ideas every day, and if he didn't sometimes get attacks of dizziness which put him out of temper for a while, there would be no company as good as his.

I have once more heard wonderful verses of my 'Song of the Spirits', but I have found it hard to remember even the enclosed. Do write them out for Knebel, with my regards. I have often thought of him.

103 To LAVATER*

Geneva,
28th October 1779.

Dear brother, Tobler has given me your letter. He has seen me only when Diodati was there too, and he couldn't speak freely, nor am I inclined to be talkative in company.

Up to now we have enjoyed travelling leisurely; the day before yesterday we were lucky and had fine weather for the Vallée du Lac de Joux and the Dole. To-day we are in Geneva, waiting for it to clear.

I don't yet know when we shall arrive, but you'll hear from me again. I like to take people by surprise, but there is something

* In Zürich.

to be said too for this delay before we see each other again; our meeting should be not only a pleasant but a blessed one for both of us. Perhaps we are a unique couple, serving God in such different ways, and together we shall discuss and decide more than a whole *Concilium* with its priests, harlots and mules. But one thing each of us must do, is to let the other's particular religion alone. You are good about that, but I am often hard and unkind, so let me ask you in advance to be patient with me.

For instance, Tobler has given me your Revelation of St. John. The only thing I like is your hand-writing which made me begin reading it. But it's no use. I see no sign of the divine, and only here and there glimpses of the poetic. The whole thing seems odious to me. I seem to be conscious all the time of someone who doesn't even sense Him who is Alpha and Omega. You see, dear brother, your preface says just the opposite . . . so we shall do well to talk quite calmly to each other. I am a very worldly person; the parables of the Unjust Steward, the Prodigal Son, the Sower, The Pearl of Great Price, The Lost Coin etc. etc. seem to me more divine (if you want something divine) than the Seven Golden Candlesticks, Horns, Seals, Stars and Woes. I too can see the Truth, but the truth of my five senses, and may God be patient with me still.

I have nothing to say against your 'Messiah', the book reads well once one gets to like it, and I think your wording of the Revelation makes a pure and clear impression. And that is what you want, so why the everlasting trump-cards that take no tricks and win no games, because nobody will accept them? You see, brother, I am still the same as ever, still a trial to you in that respect. I was tempted to tear up this page, but as we shall be seeing each other, it will do.

I won't tell you anything in advance about the Duke; even the cleverest people have judged him wrongly. You shall as it were anoint his head with precious balm, and I shall rejoice with you over him in silence; for God knows that except the sun and the moon and the everlasting stars I now call none to witness what either pleases or distresses me.

You're a modest man to feel in your bones only an inkling of my attack on that new 'System Naturae'.* Don't get ruffled about it, my old bird of paradise, you might be put on show yet with other rare birds for money.

Your stocking-weaver has been paid from Frankfort. Farewell now. It's late. Forgive my odd ways; this letter shows you how

* Probably with reference to Lavater's attack on a book by Steinbart.

glad I am to be near you and how glad I shall be to take back at the end of our Swiss journey the deep impression of your personality.

Remember me to your wife; work hard, we won't be with you for at least a fortnight. But you'll hear from me. I love you in my own way.

104 To Frau VON STEIN

*Chamouni,
4th November 1779,
about 9 p.m.*

It is only so as to be nearer to you that I take pen in hand; otherwise it would be better to let my spirits rest. We left Salenche behind us in its beautiful open valley. White cirrus clouds began to cover the sky while we were resting in the middle of the day. Let me tell you about these clouds; one bright day among the Bernese glaciers we saw them rise as fine as this and still finer; the sun appeared to draw up the airiest vapours from the highest snow-ranges, and these tenous mists seemed to be combed like fluff through the atmosphere. I cannot remember even in the dog-days at home, where similar phenomena in the air occur, ever having seen anything so transparent, so finely wrought. Already we saw before us the snow-ranges from which they rose, and the valley was coming to an end, where the Arve rushed out of a cleft in the rock; then came an ascent and we wound up higher and higher, the snow-ranges towards the right-hand side before us. A changing mountain scene and forests of old pines were on our right hand, either below us or at the same level. On the left the peaks of the mountain rose bare and sharp above us. We felt we were drawing nearer to a more rugged massif on a grander scale. We crossed one of the wide dry beds of gravel and stones that the deluges tear in the flanks of the mountains and then fill again. We entered a very pleasant, enclosed, level valley with the little village of Serves. From there the road curves past several very colourful rocks, back in the direction of the Arve. Beyond this river, and after another ascent, the masses grow larger and larger; here nature's gentle hand has begun to sketch out the prodigious. It grew darker, we approached the Chamouni Valley, and at last entered it. Only the larger masses were now visible to us; the stars came out one by one, and above the summits of the mountains before us on the right we saw a light which we could not explain; it was strong, lustreless like

the Milky Way, but more dense, almost like the Pleiades, though larger. We looked at it for a long time, till at last, on changing our point of view, we saw it top the mountain peaks like a pyramid suffused with a mysterious inward light to which a glow-worm offers the best comparison—we realised then that it was the summit of the Mont Blanc. There was something truly extraordinary in the beauty of the sight; shining among the surrounding stars—not indeed with their darting brilliancy, but with a broader, more unbroken mass of light—it seemed in our eyes to belong to those higher spheres, and we found it hard to root it in our thoughts to the earth. In front of it we saw a range of snow-covered mountains, stretched mistily above ridges dark with pines; we saw huge glaciers stretch valley-wards among dark forests.

My description is beginning to grow confused and pedantic; there ought really always to be two people, one to see and one to describe.

We are in good quarters in the central village of this valley, Le Prieuré by name, in a house built by a widow a few years ago for the many visitors. We are seated by the fire, enjoying the Muscatel from the Val d'Aosta better than the Lenten fare provided for us.

105 To KNEBEL

Zürich,
30th November 1779.

Dear Brother, I had hoped for a word or two from you in your seclusion, but I see I must knock at your door again and call to you from among my distractions. Our trip up to now has been so lovely and so happy, we hardly dare say anything in its praise. May the willing lucky breeze still help us and bring us safe back to you! Though I feel so happy and life is so varied, I long to be home again. I have no words for how dear you all grow to me day by day, and how I pray God to let us go on feeling and enjoying what we are to one another after we are together too. Away with what so often separated us, let these iron, wooden or pasteboard shells be cast for evermore into hell-fire! When shall we learn to throw off imaginary evils and then confide the real ones to one another? Keep this letter, I beg of you, and if I grow ungracious again, show me it to make me repent.

I am staying with Lavater here, in the purest joint enjoyment of life; in the circle of his friends there's a heavenly quiet and peace in

spite of the world's unrest, a constant sympathy in joy and sorrow. I see clearly, the reason is that each of them has home, wife and children and leads a modest existence, caring only for his simplest needs; that draws them closer together and casts out enmity. About my actual journey, get Frau von Stein to show you the part about the glaciers of Savoy; I hope to send the part about Valais soon too.

Lavater is as unique as ever; if you are three steps away, you can hardly appreciate him enough. Neither in Israel nor among the heathen is there such truth, faith, love, patience, strength, wisdom, goodness, zeal, wholeness, variety, serenity, etc. We have trundled a number of works of art along with us. Wonderful, some of them. I've got hold, by fair means or foul, of some Fuseli pictures and sketches; you will be amazed at them. Greetings to Herder and let him share this letter too. Farewell, be happy, and when we come back, do your bit so that we go on being happy, now that I am in the mood to be friendlier than before. Adieu, my good Knebel, let me find a line in Frankfort.

1780-1781

AN LIDA

Den Einzigen, Lida, welchen du lieben kannst,
Forderst du ganz für dich, und mit Recht.
Auch ist er einzig dein:
Denn, seit ich von dir bin,
Scheint mir des schnellsten Lebens
Lärmende Bewegung
Nur ein leichter Flor, durch den ich deine Gestalt
Immerfort wie in Wolken erblicke:
Sie leuchtet mir freundlich und treu,
Wie durch des Nordlichts bewegliche Strahlen
Ewige Sterne schimmern,

TO LIDA (Frau von Stein)

You claim for yourself, Lida—and rightly—him whom
alone you can love. And he is yours alone. For since I
have been absent from you even the noisy restlessness of
the swiftest life seems to me nothing but a thin veil behind
which I continually see your image as through clouds.
It shines out towards me, friendly and constant, as the
timeless stars gleam through the shifting radiance of
the Northern Lights.

GOETHE and the Duke returned from their Swiss journey in January 1780 and Goethe resumed his life as state-minister, scientist, artist and poet. Outwardly his life seemed rather uneventful during the following two years; no further travels interrupted it, except short semi-official ones to the other Saxonian Courts; a visit to Lessing at Wolfenbuettel did not come off as Lessing died just at that time. Goethe had never met him and Lessing had not taken much notice of the younger poet, but Goethe had always admired him and recognised the tremendous influence he had exercised on German literature with his plays *Minna von Barnhelm*, *Emilia Galotti* and *Nathan der Weise*, as well as with his critical writings, *Laokon oder ueber die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* and *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*. Lessing's death probably distressed Goethe all the more as he himself was just then working on a critical essay on German literature (this has unfortunately not been preserved). Goethe had been provoked to writing it by the essay *De la littérature allemande* which Frederick II of Prussia published in 1780. In this work the King, an admirer of Voltaire and other French writers, spoke slightly of the German literature of his day and in particular of Goethe's *Götz*, calling it 'une imitation détestable de ces mauvaises pièces anglaises' (i.e. Shakespeare's plays, which the King termed 'des farces ridicules et dignes des sauvages du Canada'). Justus Möser, the author of the *Patriotische Phantasien*, refuted Frederick's views in an essay *Über die deutsche Sprache und Literatur*.

In addition to his essay on literature, Goethe wrote at this time a comedy *Die Vögel*, an adaptation of Aristophanes' comedy, satirising Weimar personalities; *Jery und Baetely*, an operetta for which P. C. Kayser was to write the music, as he had already done for several other works of Goethe. Some more scenes of *Egmont*, and the first ones of the play *Torquato Tasso* were written at that time. An essay, *Die Natur*, though more poetical than scientific, was the fruit of Goethe's study of various branches of science.

106 To THE DUKE CARL AUGUST, THE DUCHESSES
AMALIA AND LOUISE, PRINCE CONSTANTIN,
C. v. KNEBEL, WIELAND and C. TH. v. DALBERG *

to HAUPTMANN VON KNEBEL,
kindly forward.

19th January 1780.

On the 4th May 1778 Statthalter von Dalberg wrote the following note:

‘The painter Müller is going to Italy. Wants funds, needs them. In return promises drawings, notes of his journey, warm thanks. A yearly sum, in short, till his return. I am venturing to open a subscription.’

The following added their names:

His Highness the Duke	20 Louis d’ors
Her Highness the Dowager Duchess	10 Louis d’ors
Her Highness the Duchess	10 Louis d’ors
His Highness Prince Constantine	10 Ducats
Goethe	5 Ducats
von Knebel	2 Ducats
Wieland	5 Ducats
von Dalberg	10 Ducats

Müller went to Italy in August, and in September I sent him the greater part of the first year’s sum, promising the same every year, so that he could make his arrangements accordingly.

Last September, therefore, he expected the promised sum again. But in my absence nobody had collected and seen to the money, and Müller got into great difficulties.

He wrote from Rome on the 16th October last, and I received the letter when I returned . . .

In these circumstances I sent the entire sum, 304 thaler 12 groschen our currency, to Müller in Rome, as soon as I got back; and now I should like to beg his illustrious patrons to be good enough to refund it to me.

I am convinced that the time will come when he will do credit to his benefactors as well as giving them pleasure.

I shall discuss arrangements for the future with him and shall make known his reply without fail.

* Statthalter of Erfurt.

Weimar,
23rd March 1780.

My best wishes to you on your return and good morning.

As I was reading your 'Oberon' I kept wanting to tell you how much I admire and enjoy it. I have so much to say to you, I suppose I shall never do it. However, you know how the mind turns, after a lot of thinking, from the complicated to the simple; so instead of anything else, here's a sign that I beg, you will take in its original sense, full of meaning. Take, then, from a friend's hands what present and future readers will gladly confirm.

1st May 1780.

I am sending you the highest and the lowest, a hymn and a pig-sty. Love links all things.

Erfurt,
5th May 1780.

We have been riding about the country, we have seen some roads that are costly but still bad, nor will they ever get better; we have met good people, living quiet lives; we have had exercise for mind and body.

Count Ley [Dalberg's young brother-in-law] gave a supper and dance for the ladies yesterday. There were some charming girls there and it was rather fun. Our young host kept teasing his fair guests with endless childish folly and they had great fun together. The Statthalter was cheerful. We had some real talk together, and I find his conversation most instructive. The stories of his many political activities lift my mind out of the simple web I tend to spin round myself; it has, indeed, many threads, but it ties me too much to one central point. The Statthalter himself is not a true child of this world; clever and adroit as his plans are, I fear one after the other they will miscarry. He possesses admirable skill in social and political matters, as well as an enviable degree of facility. We indulged in arm-chair politics, and I always make my own use of what I hear from any quarter of the world. I quietly acquire and husband energy and skill (that is to say power) and then wait for a good chance to make use of it. The race is not to the swift, etc.

* With a laurel-wreath.

† With a poem and a drawing of a pig-sty.

Adieu, dearest. To you who are so far removed from the world, we must seem like children carrying water from the river to the sea; surely, it would get there quicker on its own. Be near to me still and forgive my writing to you always of my own affairs; I would turn to stone without you. Adieu, I have a hundred plans quietly taking shape within me, and yet my existence seems monotonous to me. These few days of change and people and things are doing me a world of good. In my own eyes I am like a stone-swallower, gulping down gravel to satisfy his hunger even after the heaviest meal. Adieu. To-morrow is Saturday, I'll be lunching with you.

110 To J. C. KESTNER

Weimar,
14th May 1780.

I am so glad we have come together again. I was thinking of you the other day and wanted to know how things are with you. I have long planned to pay you a visit; some day perhaps I'll manage it and find you and your five little boys all well and happy. I would so like you to send me a family letter some time, with Lotte, and the children who are able to write, putting in a few lines, so that we get nearer to each other again. I will be sending you something more too, for although work is on the increase, I have already more leisure to think of my friends . . .

I am not surprised you liked 'Oberon' so much, it is a splendid poem. Wieland is a poet, if ever we had one in Germany. My writing has to subordinate itself to life. But I follow the example of the great King, who devoted some hours daily to the flute, and I sometimes allow myself to exercise the talent that is in me. I have a good deal here in manuscript, almost as much as I have published; I have plenty of plans, but not enough collectedness and leisure to carry them out. I have written some things for the amateur theatre here, mostly of course after a conventional pattern. Adieu.

111 To FRIEDRICH MÜLLER*

Weimar,
12th June 1780.

My dear Müller, your letter [from Rome] came very quickly; do please go on sending your vivid descriptions whenever you like;

* The young German painter in Rome.

they make me feel I am with you. Tell me about people, art, the town, anything old or new that comes to your mind. And do send me something soon, no matter what, just a sketch of some ruins, it needn't be anything finished. Everybody is asking to see something, and not many people believe without signs and wonders. You are quite right about my drawings, I don't work hard enough to acquire real sureness. Especially as I can only devote myself in snatches to attendance on the Muses, and the choice of subjects is a strange business too. In these parts there's so little summer, the trees are beautiful for so short a time, one so rarely feels the need of the moist shade of springs for shelter—the countryside itself is ordinary and even at best can tempt only the practised artist's eye—though I suppose nothing is really ordinary if it is well done. So one gets a liking for things one constantly sees, alike at every season and time of day; and their narrow, limited usefulness gives them a special charm, while their line, light, and shade are easy to spell out. I mean tumbledown cottages, little courtyards, thatched roofs, timber-work, pig-sties. One has often passed them by in happy hours, they are always there to be sketched. One is glad to flee from the world and its mansions to what is lowly, to find refreshment in the simple and the unsophisticated. One comes to attach so many ideas to these things, and they grow to have even more charm for us than nobler objects. I think that's what has happened, in the art of the Netherlands.

But I will take your warning to heart and seek out the best, at least as far as I can. I am not doing any more etching. I shall go on sketching from nature as my mood and circumstances permit. Farewell.

Tell me if this address is right.

112 To FRAU VON STEIN

Weimar,
26th June 1780.

Yesterday I was in Ettersburg, enjoying dictating part of our mischievous 'Birds' to Fräulein von Goechausen, when the news of a fire in Gross-Brembach brought me out, and soon I was in the midst of the flames. The long dry spell and an unlucky wind made the blaze quite unmanageable. It makes one feel somehow quite alone and yet everyone has an honest and genuine desire to take some kind of action. The people who only see what is *not* being done are as always the most dangerous, for they mislead those who are

intent upon what has to be done. I exhorted, begged, comforted, calmed, and turned my whole attention on the church which was still in danger when I arrived and where, besides the building, a great deal of fruit belonging to the Lord would have been destroyed in the loft. Taking to flight too soon is the worst thing on these occasions; one could do marvels by resisting and not trying to escape. But men are only human, whereas fire is a monster. This is the only fire I have faced so far at the height of its fury. The way our villages are built, you might expect one every day. It's as if we had to live in a neatly and carefully constructed wood-pile, collected for the express purpose of quickly catching fire.

There was nobody who would fetch water from the pond, for the the wind was sweeping the flames into it from the nearest houses. I went up to it and called out 'It can, can be done, children', and at once some began fetching water again, but I soon had to give up; I couldn't stay there for more than a few moments. My eyebrows are singed and the water seething in my shoes has scalded my toes. After midnight, while it was all still burning and crackling, I lay down for a little rest in the inn and was plagued by bugs; so I've tasted much human misery and discomfort. The Duke and the Prince came later and did what they could. I noticed a few quite ordinary mistakes, always overlooked.

Forgive my spoiling your pleasure with scenes and pictures of horror. I suddenly thought last night among the flames how destiny is running wild: Sicily is once more shaken; [Vesuvius and Etna] belch forth, and the English set their own town alight*—all this in the enlightened eighteenth century.

As I rode in this morning, I thought how delightful it would have been could I have wished you a good-morning. Adieu, you must come back soon, that's all. Adieu, dearest.

The children have brought me little notes.

Remember me to Frau von Imhoff and the 'Little One'.

My strawberries are neglected; I send some away now and then, but it's not at all the same thing.

Clauer is making a fine job of Cesar's bust.

My roses are flowering right up to the roof, and as long as that covers my house, it can have no more welcome guest than you. Adieu dearest. The first thing I did when I got to the fire yesterday, was to take my ring off and put it in my pocket.

* The Gordon Riots in London.

I am glad indeed that we are drawing closer again through Knebel's [visit to you]. In a little place like Weimar the mingling of strange personalities results in a kind of fermentation. It may be pleasantly sourish, but we sometimes feel as if we were having to eat just the yeast; it makes a poor dish, but it is both tasty and wholesome if you add a small quantity of it to flour.

You say you enjoyed my 'Iphigenie'; that is like a very special present for me. We are so close and our thoughts and imagination so far apart that we are rather like two marksmen standing back to back and shooting at different targets. I never dare to hope that anything of mine may mean something to you. So it makes me really happy to feel that with this work I have touched your heart once more.

Adieu. I shall send the Dürer [-prints] as soon as I have added what you sent. You are quite right, I go at things as if we were to live on this earth for ever.

The enclosed is for Knebel.

I wonder whether you have spoilt any of your 'Apocalypse'? This recently happened to me. I had taken a dozen or so lines out of a play and I had to put them back again when the Duke saw it.

Love to Bäbe. Send something soon about Waser. Adieu, my dear fellow. The Duke sends greetings.

We shall never in our lives become great physiognomists, but it would be a good thing if you told us something about it too.

Speaking of Wieland's 'Oberon' you use the word 'talent', as though it were the opposite of genius or even something subordinate to it. But we ought to remember that real talent is simply the language of genius. I won't quibble, for I know roughly what you mean; I am just plucking at your sleeve; we are often too fond of general terms. Even with a book, when we have admired it and enjoyed every page, once we have finished it, we often go at it with scissors as if it were only a sheet of paper. Even if I saw 'Oberon' only as a silhouette, not even the finest scissors could follow all the little outlines, features and lines that make it so valuable. And in a work like this there is something more, something so rare that it is not easy to assess: that the author has intended and done nothing beyond what is there. We ought to be truly grateful to him for the feeling, art and delicacy which led him to leave out many things; yet only his fellow-artists will thank him.

I beg you, pay no attention to your thick-skulled scientific fellows in Zurich and what they say about men born under another sky.* The greatest men I have known, whose look embraced heaven and earth, were humble and knew what to value at each stage. Arrogance is for such monastic candidates and rabble alone. Let them jingle a concert to one another under the cap and bells of their own complacency. Republican pressure and the atmosphere of fummy weeklies and learned periodicals would drive any sensible man mad at once. Only their conceit, narrowness and empty-headedness keeps such men smug and well.

Tell Kayser I have put my name down meanwhile for twelve copies.

Love to Bäbe.

114 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
11th August 1780.

Many thanks for your enquiries about my health; do, I beg you, keep calm about it, for no amount of anxiety ever kept anybody alive. I don't worry how long life may last, but just go on doing each day what the circumstances demand and what my views, capacities, and powers permit. I remind myself often of the sage who said three well-spent hours were enough.

As for you, I shall mention you among those I shall ask my friends to care for after my death.

115 To The Marquise BRANCONI†

Weimar,
28th August 1780.

Let me greet you at my parents' house at the door where in the course of my life I have passed in and out with such countless different feelings. Accept a very hearty welcome and my most grateful thanks for the few days you devoted to us here. I am only now tasting your presence, as one tastes wine only some time after swallowing it. When you are there one wishes one were richer in eyes, ears and mind; then one might see, believe and realise that Heaven has been pleased and able to create anything like you, after

* Critics of Herder.

† Who after a few days in Weimar had visited Goethe's parents in Frankfort.

so many unsuccessful attempts. To tell you the impression you have left behind you, I should have to go on and on with these seeming hyperboles which in fact are but strict, sober prose. But that sort of thing isn't considered proper, so I must break off and keep the best to myself.

A good journey to you; my respects to your 'gentle eye-browed' companion and to the Dean.

My Mother is sure to write at once; give her a message for me. You can say such beautiful things, and the beautiful so beautifully, one enjoys them like sunshine though one doesn't dream it is shining on one's own account.

What you were promised is in order and indeed it is partly under way.

di Vossignoria + + + issima
il servo + + + issimo
Goethe.

I leave it to your superior knowledge of Italian to substitute the most suitable epithets in place of these crosses; a whole long poem would just fit in there.

116 To Frau VON LA ROCHE

Weimar,
1st September 1780.

Dear Mama, here's a letter from a son who is naughty, yes, but not really bad. He is taking this good opportunity to present himself once more. Herr von Knebel, one of our circle here, a very fine man, is going to call on you; please receive him kindly and give him the enclosed.

Do let me know afterwards if you liked him, and I will be very pleased if you add some news of yourself.

I saw Mme de Branconi the other day; we spoke of you and I recommended your 'Women's Letters' to her.

It has just occurred to me you may be able to feed one of my strongest fancies at present, if you would be so kind.

I am heart and soul engaged in studying mineralogy, now I have had to do with mining. Could you get one of the legion of spirits ready at your command to collect some specimens from your district or elsewhere? It would be a feast for me; as it is not bread but only ore and stones I'm asking for, it should be quite easy.

Addio. Wieland is well and wants to wear his own hair again.

To see Bode in all his strength, one has only to start a criticism of you; that sets him biting and lashing out.

We are living as well as we mortals can. I am my usual self, thoughtfully imprudent and warmly cold. Adieu once more: My love to your daughters and my respects to Herr von La Roche, if he still remembers me.

Herr von Knebel is likely to be going to Düsseldorf, so I am full of hopes that he'll manage to effect my reconciliation with our old Fritz.* I think we have all grown wiser now; the time has come to save up for our old age, and I'd like to get back the old friends I have seen drifting from me in one way or another, and if possible to go along and down the hill on consistently good terms with them.

There is still a great deal to say, but I will stop.

117 To Frau VON STEIN

*In the Harz mountains,
7th September 1780,
morning.*

The sun is up; the day is bright and clear. There was a little wind during the night and I shall have good weather to-day for Goldlauter and up the Schneekopf.

A good morning to you, before I start.

*Ilmenau,
7th September 1780, evening.*

My journey is now happily over and I am sitting and resting here while you are being spun round in the whirl of society, and the illuminations are being prepared.

We climbed right to the summit, we crept into the depths of the earth, hoping so much to discover the nearer traces of the great shaping hand. Some day the man will surely come, who will see it all clearly, we seek to prepare the way for him. We have discovered some very fine things that set the mind soaring and expanding in the atmosphere of truth. If only we could soon find work and bread for these poor moles here. The view from the Schneekopf is very fine. Good-night. I'm tired. I could still think and chat, but I can't write any more. There were some pleasant moments to-day—good-night I just can't write any details.

* Friedrich Jacobi.

I have been passive to-day and got nothing done worth doing, and so I don't feel happy, my dearest. The Duke is still not quite well; first he is careful, then he pretends he is all right, then he is careless—and so one seems to dawdle away one's life and these good days.

This morning all the murderers, thieves and receivers were summoned, questioned and confronted with each other. At first I didn't want to be present, for I shun anything defiled. It is a great study of human nature and physiognomy, where one likes to lay one's finger to one's lips and leave it all to God with whom alone is power and wisdom for ever and ever, Amen.

A son who with every detail accuses himself and his father of murder. A father who denies everything his son says to his face. A man who in the agony of famine sees his wife die beside him in the barn and, because nobody will bury her, has to hide her in the earth himself; and now this misery is counted against him, as if he could have murdered her, for he is under suspicion because of some other denunciations, etc.

After this I went back into the hills; we had a meal there, amused ourselves with some birds of prey, and I kept wanting to write either to you or at my novel, but I never got to either. But I wish I had written out for you a long conversation which I had with the Duke on the subject of delinquents and the value and futility of human actions. In the evening Stein came and sat with me and entertained me delightfully with old tales of the wretchedness of Court life, of children and women, etc. Good-night, dearest. I am sorry for this wasted day. It might have been better spent, but we have at least made use of its fragments.

Another day without a moment's unpleasantness. I have spent some of it just looking, and some thinking my own thoughts, speaking only to ask questions. We have been in the Stahlberg near Schmalkalden and have made a great number of observations. You must become a geology-enthusiast, it's wonderful; you have taken interest in more than one thing for my sake in the past.

We were late in arriving here, for Princes and Princesses can never leave anywhere at the right time, as Stein observed when time hung heavily on his hands while His Highness tried out rifles and pistols. For my part, I got out my 'Euripides' to brighten this dull quarter of an hour.

I thank the gods for this greatest of gifts, that I can split a happy day like this one by speed and variety of thought, and make a little eternity of its millions of parts.

I feel like that pleasant Mirza on the way to the famous Fair of Kabul; nothing is too large or too small for me to look for, long for, bargain for, and when all my money is spent, I fall in love with the Princess of Kashmir. And the main journeys are still to come, through deserts, forests, over mountain-ridges, and from those to the moon. Dear Heart, whenever I wake from my dream, I always find myself loving you and longing for you. To-night as we were riding towards lighted windows I thought: if only she were there to welcome us! This is a miserable hole, and yet, if I could spend a quiet winter here with you, I think I should like it. Good-night, Dearest. I suppose I can't hope to get letters from you for a while. My pages are numbered and cut to the same size, and I'll keep to that. Addio. This will go via Eisenach.

120 To Frau VON STEIN

*Kalten Nordheim,
14th September 1780.*

. . . My head feels like a mill for husking, grinding, thrashing and pressing out oil—all its runs working at once.

'O thou sweet Poetry' I sometimes cry, and I think Mark Antony fortunate, just as he thanked the gods that he never concerned himself with poetry and eloquence. As far as I can, I draw off the water from poetry's fountains and cascades, and divert it for mills and irrigation; but before I know where I am, some evil sprite turns the cock, and it all spouts and gushes again. And when I imagine I am sitting on my old nag, riding just the stage that duty prescribes, suddenly the mare under me becomes splendidly transformed with unmanageable spirits and wings, and bears me off and away.

Here I am, ducal courier and travelling counsellor and fit for one as the other. Do take this continual *περι εαυτου** kindly, I haven't

* About himself.

finished with it, for when I have been busy all day long with worldly affairs I cannot write about, I have to tell you how they affect me, and then I am as rich in parables as Sancho Panza in proverbs.

Amidst to-day's commotion I thought of myself as a bird that has plunged for some good reason into water; when it is in danger of drowning, the gods change its feathers into fins. The fishes that go to its help cannot understand why it does not feel at home directly in their element . . .

121 To LAVATER

*Ostheim by the Rhön,
20th September 1780.*

Your letters of the 2nd and the 9th of this month did not reach me till to-day; we are visiting some outlying districts of the Principality of Eisenach and are seeing several new, good, and useful arrangements at close quarters, that have been in action since last spring.

It is a good thing that you have kept the 60 Louis d'or; Bertuch's letter will have arrived, and you shall have instalments to make up the full sum of 100 Rhenish Thaler.

I am not able to answer your question about the Fair One.* I have treated her as I would a princess or a saint. And even though it were only a fancy, I should not like to sully such an image with the familiarity of transient passion. And God preserve us from any serious bond by which she would squeeze the soul out of my very limbs.

The day's work I have to do, which seems lighter and heavier from one day to another, demands my attention whether waking or dreaming. This duty becomes daily more precious to me, and I should like to equal the greatest men in this and not in anything greater. The base of my life's pyramid has been measured out and its foundations have been laid for me, and the longing to raise it as high as possible into the air outweighs everything else and hardly allows me to forget it for a moment. I ought not to delay, I am advanced in years, and Fate might break me in the middle and this tower of Babel remain an unfinished rump. But people shall at any rate say: 'It was boldly planned'; and if I live, my strength shall, God willing, last out till I reach the top.

And then, the talisman of the exquisite love with which Frau

* The Marquise Branconi.

von Stein seasons my life helps me greatly. She has gradually inherited from my mother, my sister and my loves, and a bond has been woven which is like the bonds of nature.

Adieu, dear friend, stay near me in spirit. With the Dürers, that are travelling slowly because of the expense, there are flowers and bunches of herbs coming, that I keep gathering by the wayside. Show them only to a few, and on no account to any self-styled author; rogues like that have always stolen and copied from me, and got my way of writing into bad odour with the public.

Send me whatever you like.

I am waiting for your *Offenbarung*; your alterations will be my topic of discussion with you and a study in true criticism.

Herder keeps on making life bitter for himself and others.

The Duke is very good and sound. If the gods would only grant me more space for him! The bonds by which the spirits lead us lie too tightly about some of his limbs while at other times he enjoys perfect freedom.

Since I have ceased to make any claims as a physiognomist my mind has grown very keen and sensitive; almost from the first moment I know how I stand with people.

If you send me back my things nicely and do not show them round, you shall have more of them. There might be something for you among them.

A few chief points about physiognomy have become clear to me; they will be nothing new to you, but are of importance to me because of their consequences.

Have I written to you already the phrase *Individuum est ineffabile*? I derive a whole world from it.

It is all right about Bodmer's manuscript.

Love to Båbe and to your wife.

122 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
31st January 1781.

You have done right in unburdening your soul to me. I am sure I understand, however little I am able really to reassure you. I have to keep my budget balanced if by the end of the year I am not to be under obligations most unsuitable to my position. So I cannot do any more for you than the 200 thaler. You can count on this; try to manage with it and get what you need by degrees.

I make this express condition; that you do not change your lodgings or place of residence without my knowledge and consent. Every one of us has some obligation; make this the obligation of your love to me, and you will find it an easy one.

I shouldn't at all like you to borrow from anyone. This unhappy restlessness that is tormenting you at present is the cause of your whole life's misfortunes. You have never been more content with a thousand thaler than you are now with 200, because you always had something more to wish for and you have never made a habit of keeping your wishes within the limits of necessity. I'm not reproaching you with this, I know only too well how it all fits together, and I feel what a torment the contrast between your present and your former position must be to you. But enough of that; just one word more. You'll get your 50 thaler at the end of every quarter; Seidel shall advance you some of the current amount. Economise, then; 'must' is a hard word, but it's the only thing that shows what a man is really made of. It's easy to live just as one wants to . . .

123 To KRAFFT

Weimar,
11th February 1781.

If you read my last letter again calmly, you can't fail to see you have taken me up wrongly. You haven't 'sunk in my estimation', nor have I a 'bad impression' of you, nor have I abandoned my 'good opinion', nor has your way of thinking 'become tarnished' in my eyes. All these are exaggerated expressions that no reasonable man should use. If I frankly say what I think, if I wish some aspects of your way of thinking and acting were different, does that mean I think you to be 'bad' and break off our former relations?

What I criticise and deplore is precisely this hypochondriacal, weakly and unbalanced disposition that once more prompted you to write this last letter. Is it right for you to tell me I 'ought to order the tone of your future letters'? Does one give that sort of order to any honest, reasonable person? Is it kind of you to take this opportunity to stress that you 'eat my bread'? Is it seemly in a man of any moral strength when faintly criticised or called unwell in some respect, to fly out at once and to behave as though his house were tumbling about his ears?

You ought not to be angry with me for wanting you to be happy and contented with what I can do for you, little as it is.

Things are just as they were, if you want it; I at least shall not alter in my behaviour to you.

Now about that magistrate's plan about the taxes . . .

124 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
20th February 1781.*

It would have been hard to find anything more shattering to me than Lessing's death. Barely a quarter of an hour before the news came, I was planning to visit him. In him we lose a very great deal, more than we think. Adieu, Dearest. The Privy Council meets to-day; I will dine at home and see you after the play. I haven't the slightest wish to go to it.

125 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
22nd March 1781.*

Your love seems to me like the morning star and the evening star; it sets after the sun and rises before it. In fact it is like the pole star that never sets, but weaves an undying wreath above our heads. I pray that the gods may never darken it for me as I go through life. This first spring-rain will spoil our drive. But it will swell the plants, and we shall soon enjoy the first green shoots. We have not had such a beautiful spring together before; may it not turn to autumn. Adieu. I'll call about noon to see how things are. Adieu, my Love, my Dearest.

126 To Frau VON STEIN

2nd April 1781.

As usual I am already regretting I'll not be lunching with you to-day. Say something good and kind to me, my Dearest. This morning is all right; if only the day continues so. Adieu. Tell me what you are doing? How will it be this evening? Adieu, Dearest.

Necker's ['Compte rendu au roi'] is an enormous legacy for the world and posterity. It's spirit quickens and the 'flesh' is also of use.

127 To CHARLOTTE VON STEIN *approx. 25th April 1781.*

I thank the gods for the gift of holding the essence of whatever goes on within me, in the lingering sound of my poems. I'll call for you to go to the concert.

128 To CHARLOTTE VON STEIN *28th April 1781.*

To-day the weather is calling you and your heart inviting you to come to me and enjoy the last of the blossom. Tell me, dear one, how you slept, when you will come this afternoon, and who will come with you? Adieu, dear and inexhaustible source of my happiness.

129 To Frau VON VOIGTS* *Weimar,
21st June 1781.*

Your letter was like a whole chorus of voices, I was really delighted with it. Living on, quietly busy, with only the nearest and most ordinary contacts, we lose the feeling of anything distant and it is hard to believe that the remembrance of us lives on far away, that certain notes still sound from times gone by. Your letter and your Father's essay persuade me very pleasantly of the contrary. It is noble of the old Patriarch to own his people publicly and before the great; for it is really he who has led us into this land, and his finger has pointed out to us wider stretches than we were allowed to wander through. How often I have wondered what Moeser would have thought or said of my attempts. His upright feeling did not allow him to keep silence on this occasion, for if you want to influence the public you must reiterate certain things and correct certain false perspectives. Men are so constituted that they like looking through a telescope and when they think it suits their eyes they praise it highly. But if someone alters the focus and things look blurred, then they get confused and even if they don't blame the telescope, they don't know how to adjust it themselves and they take fright and would rather not touch it.

Your Father has acted again here like a rich man inviting someone to a simple meal and setting him down at a table of choice dishes. All over the country he has roused so many similar ideas

* Daughter of Justus Möser.

that he deserves the thanks of every German interested in this just cause and in the continuation of these efforts. I am much obliged to him for what he says of my writings, for I have made it a rule to preserve a strict silence about myself and what I produce. I am particularly glad to second his view of my writings as attempts, as attempts with reference to myself as a writer and to the present decade, not to say century of our literature. It certainly never crossed my mind to set up any works of mine as an example, to favour any style to the exclusion of others, or to teach and spread my own individual views and sentiments. Tell your Father to rest assured I am still striving daily to form my mind by the best traditions and nature's ever living truthfulness. I go on from one attempt to the next, trying to draw nearer, in all I do and write and read, to the ideal that hovers before us all even though we have never seen it, and cannot give it a name. I am not surprised that the King should mention my play slightly. An autocrat who rules men in their thousands with a rod of iron is bound to find the work of a free, unruly youth unacceptable. Besides, a just and tolerant taste can hardly be the distinctive attribute of a King, for possessing it would not help him towards a great name. A certain narrowness is rather what seems to me suited to the great and distinguished. Let us not worry about that, but together remain faithful to all that is true, and honour alone the beautiful and sublime that stands on its summit.

Here's my silhouette, perhaps I shall soon be able to send you something not quite so flat. Please send me yours and your Father's; I like them large, like a shadow thrown on the wall, and not cut out. Farewell; very many thanks once more for this opportunity to write this letter; believe me, I would welcome any occasion that could bring you nearer to me and me to you.

130 To J. L. ECKHARDT*

*Ilmenau,
2nd July 1781.*

In my opinion there will be no further risk for us provided the miller has a binding declaration drawn up, stating that he is willing to remove from the canal and the locality at any time that the Ilmenau Mines Department shall order it.

But he must give notice of this declaration in Gotha too, and some

* An official in Weimar.

kind of guarantee must be obtained there. I leave the means to your well-known skill, the bonds and fetters that shall bind him. Adieu, once again.

131 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE

Weimar,
11th August 1781.

I got 'Devin du Village'* yesterday with Melchior [Grimm's] work. I have not had time or peace to answer your last dear letter. It made me so happy to find your own familiar thoughts expressed again and to read them in your own hand. Please don't worry about me; and don't let anything distress you. I am in much better health than I could formerly have expected or hoped, sufficiently well to do at least most of what I ought; so I have every reason to be content. And despite great inconveniences my situation is in many respects really most pleasing. The best proof is that I can think of none I would take in place of it. For surely it is unseemly to give way to melancholy restlessness and long to change your own skin for another. Merck and others are quite wrong about my situation; they can see only what I give up and not what I gain, and they can't understand that by daily yielding so much, I grow daily richer.

You remember the last time I spent with you before coming here; if that had continued it would have been the ruin of me. The incongruity of the narrow, ponderous, bourgeois society in Frankfurt with the range and pace of my own temperament would have driven me mad. In spite of my lively imagination and insight into human affairs, I should never there have grown to know the world. I should have remained for ever in a sort of childhood, made unbearable to itself and others by conceit and kindred faults. I was fortunate to be placed in a situation for which nothing had hitherto fitted me and which gave me plenty of opportunity to get to know myself and others through many an error due to misjudgement and haste. Left to myself and fate, I was tried in many ways and this was absolutely necessary for me, though hundreds of others would probably never have needed it. And even now, at this stage, it seems to me impossible to wish for any happier situation than one which for me has something limitless about it. Even could new capacities develop within me daily, my ideas steadily become

* by Rousseau.

clearer, my powers increase, my knowledge widen, my judgement gain in precision and my confidence grow, I should still find daily opportunity to make use in general and in particular of all these qualities.

You can see how far I am from the melancholy restlessness that sets so many at variance with their circumstances. Only absolutely vital considerations or quite extraordinary and unexpected events could bring me to quit this post. The trees I planted are beginning to grow, there is hope of separating the chaff from the wheat at harvest, and I should be lacking in my duty to myself, if some mere discomfort made me remove and so rob myself of shade, fruits, and harvest. At the same time, believe me, much of my courage to bear and act springs from the thought that these sacrifices are all voluntary and that I have only to order the post-horses to find once more the necessities and pleasures of life, and complete peace, at home with you. For without this possibility, much would be harder to bear, and in moments of vexation, I should feel like a serf, a poor labourer.

I hope always to hear from you that, in spite of Father's state now, you never lose your cheerfulness. Do go on giving yourself as much amusement as your social circle offers. I don't think it likely I shall be able to leave here this autumn, certainly not before the end of September. But I will try to be with you for the vintage. So let me know if it is likely to fall earlier on account of the fine summer.

Farewell; greetings to my good old friends.

132 To MERCK

14th November 1781.

Your letter came to-day; I am answering it at once, with many thanks. I have had one to you ready for some time and it only needed this reminder to get it off.

The enclosed book [by Voigt] will show you that we have not been lazy in mineralogical matters; we have seized our little bit of land by all its four corners.

Voigt is now covering the whole Fulda District at the Prince-Bishop's request, and has come on nothing but volcanic products as yet. I am going to see to it that the rest of Thuringia and perhaps the Harz district are described in a similar way and with the same terminology. This, even if the writer is here and there at fault,

will be a great advantage to the public, because anyone reflecting and searching on the spot for himself will always be quicker to see the important features of a similar case. If you say you would like it, I shall send you the collection of stones that belongs to it; they are all lettered to correspond with the tables, and this is of course most interesting, for it is easy to compare the author's terminology with one's own. But in exchange you must send us some of your things; I am particularly curious to see the green vitreous lava from Butzbach.

The beginning of winter finds me very well and I am glad to be able to tell you that the mental and bodily troubles that threatened me last summer have as good as wholly passed off.

I go my own way as you can well imagine, getting more and more used to what is burdensome in my official duties; I make my armour fit and sharpen my weapons in my own way. My other hobbies run along beside and I keep them going by adding a little now and then, like keeping a mine going as long as there seems to be any hope of some future benefit. This winter I plan to study human anatomy with the teachers and students of our School of Art. This is to benefit them as well as me, to make the remarkable nature of this unique creature clear to them and so to help them to the first step from where they can seek what is important for the rendering of visible objects. At the same time I shall use the bones as a text on which I can hang all that is to be said about life and man. I shall have the additional benefit of speaking in public twice a week and of discussing matters of importance to me with people who are interested, a pleasure one has wholly to renounce in our usual life of society, official business, and the Court. Everyone then draws and becomes familiar with those parts that have been discussed. By these means I also shall improve in my drawing of forms, making them more accurate and significant.

I mean to go through my essay on German Literature again as soon as I get it back from my mother. I hoped to give you pleasure by writing it. I had planned to add a second part, for there is no end to the problem. But now my first impulse has passed and I have nothing more to say. Nobody who knows what he is really like could be astonished at the old King's writings. When the public hears of a hero who has done great deeds, it pictures him as a fine, upstanding, handsome man, in a conveniently general sort of way. In just the same way one ascribes a clear, just understanding to any man who has achieved a great deal. One thinks of him generally

as unprejudiced, well-informed and impartial. This is what has happened with the King. He has done great deeds and forced the course of world-history his way, despite his shabby blue coat, his hump-backed figure and all his obstinate, prejudiced, incorrigible way of looking at things.

And now I must let you know that I have the two fine volumes of Faujas de Saint Fond, on volcanoes, and the essay on the mineralogy of the Pyrenees; they are both essential for the new mineralogical studies. Good luck in your quarrel with Höpfner. Greetings to your wife and children.

Do remember me and give me your news from time to time.

I am going to spend the winter in my nest out here in [the garden]. In future I shall have roomy quarters in a pleasant part of the town. I am settling down to life here without yielding a hair's breadth in my inner nature that keeps me going and gives me happiness. Adieu.

One more thing; I have received a portrait of Prince Constantine by Tischbein of Rome; it is quickly painted and quite excellent. Where is he staying now?

1781-1786

Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.

Torquato Tasso,
1. Akt, 2. Szene

Talent is formed in quietness, but character in the moving
waters of the world.

Torquato Tasso,
Act 1, Scene 2

GOETHE's official duties continued to increase; the heaviest addition was when he was given control of Finance in 1782, after Herr von Kalb had been dismissed on a charge of incompetence. Another burden was the supervision on behalf of the Duke of Weimar of the University of Jena, not only in scientific but also in administrative matters. In 1785 for instance, Goethe had to advise the Duke on the measures to be taken against the excesses of the students: Carl August had invited the views of nineteen Jena professors, among them Eichhorn, Griesbach and Loder, and asked Goethe to confer with them.

Despite all this, Goethe intensified his scientific studies during this period; he took up fresh biological studies and continued with his botanical and geological ones; an article *Der Granit* was the fruit of the latter. But his main interest centred on anatomy which he studied with Professor Loder of Jena and which he himself taught at the College of Art; he also corresponded on anatomy with S. T. Soemmering, an anatomist and doctor in Cassell. Early in 1784 success crowned his researches for he was able to show in the human skull traces of the intermaxillary bone. Scientists had hitherto assumed the existence of this bone in the skulls of animals alone, and had taken this to constitute a fundamental difference between man and animals. Goethe's discovery therefore helped to establish man's evolutionary connection with the rest of the animal kingdom.

Nor did he neglect drawing and painting, with the result that less and less time was left for literary work. He nevertheless continued working at *Wilhelm Meister*, completed *Torquato Tasso* in prose, re-edited *Werther*, wrote two operettas, *Die Fischerin* and *Scherz, List und Rache* and the epic poem *Die Geheinnisse*, which however remained a fragment. Some beautiful lyrics too belong to this period. But gradually Goethe came to feel more and more that his development as a poet was being frustrated through the demands made by his public duties, and in the summer of 1786 he at length resolved to free himself for a time from these responsibilities and to start on that journey to Italy which he had longed to make, ever since as a child he had listened to his father telling him of the wonders of that country. He started southwards on 3rd September 1786.

*Weimar,
3rd December 1781.*

... I can quite imagine your smiling at this new proof of my tirelessness. But I can't claim much merit for it. A person like me is obliged to keep adding to his many activities; I should be just as busy in the smallest hamlet or on a desert island; I cannot live in any other way. Even if I find things distasteful, I can get over that quite easily. For one of my articles of faith is that it is only steadfastness and loyalty in present circumstances that makes us fit to reach the next higher stage either here or in eternity.

I think as you do about the Emperor.† If his luck holds and his genius does not forsake him, he is the man to gain much without a blow.

*Eisenach,
10th December 1781,
evening.*

The hours seemed long, not to say endless in Barchfeld. I must learn to play cards just for occasions like this. Here too, I cling to the thought of your love. Even when my thoughts are elsewhere, my soul has a thousand associations it links with the memory of you; and however distant I seem to be, I always find I have been thinking of you for some time before I am aware of it.

You will like the enclosed letter for it speaks of other's goodwill to him who is your own. The bit about the minerals won't interest you. N.B., the only piece of booty from Barchfeld is a precious specimen of rock which I can show you, if you like, and tell you why it's interesting.

The lavas of Butstedt are very fine, by the way.

I have disengaged myself from everything here in Eisenach, to give my time to myself and you. Stein is staying with his sister, he'll come to think highly of his brother-in-law, who is a scoundrel, however, both at heart and outwardly.

I find it perfectly natural now to please and help Stein. I owe it to you, and what don't I owe daily to you and yours? What's the use of love's crucifying and blessing, and not acting? Tell me of anything that gives you pleasure, for I'm not always aware of it.

* With reference to Goethe's anatomy studies at the College of Art.

† Joseph II.

The favour shown to me at Gotha attracts much notice; I welcome it, both for my own sake and that of the good cause. It's quite just that a Court should restore to me what I have lost through a Court . . .

Remember me to Ernst and Fritz, and, if you can, remember me kindly to your own self.

The Duke is happy and good at heart, but I find this fun is too expensive; he feeds 80 men in the wilds and the frosty weather and hasn't yet shot one boar, for he is determined to hunt in open country, which won't do at all. He plagues and annoys his people, and entertains a couple of spongers from among the local gentry who aren't in the least grateful. And all this with the best will in the world to give pleasure to himself and others. Heaven knows if he'll ever learn that fireworks at noon make no showing. I dislike being always the spoil-sport, but with the others, he neither asks for advice nor says what he means to do. Besides, I only see him at odd moments.

I pray God to make me daily more thrifty, so that I may be more generous, with money or goods, life or death.

135 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
19th December 1781.

I'm sending you the book*; I have read as far as his death. It was a great catastrophe ending a great life, and it was a fine thing that he died that way. The man who becomes a god cannot go on living, nor ought he, for his own and others' sake.

Adieu, I'm very near to you. Your goodness and love are the air I breathe. Good-night. I'd bring you this message myself, if I were still dressed.

136 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
11th February 1782.

Say a word to me, Lotte. Your love makes me feel I no longer dwell in tents and tabernacles, but have been endowed with a house on solid foundations to live and die therein, and in which to keep all my possessions. I'll see you for a moment before ten. I cannot say farewell, for I never part from you.

* On Captain Cook's journey.

*Weimar,
2nd March 1782.*

You already know my first waking thoughts. Tell me how you have slept? Here's the French 'German Theatre'. Vous y trouverez une tragédie d'un M. Goethe, qui s'est acquis une grande renommée par ses écrits et qui naquit en 1749 pour vous aimer en 1782 et toute sa vie . . .

*Eisenach,
2nd April 1782.*

From Gotha where I was spoilt like a mother's darling, I have come here where cares fall upon me like hungry lions. If I had the affairs of the Duchy in as flourishing a state as my own, we could talk of good fortune; and if fortune were as true and as gracious to us as you are to me, then one might call us blessed even in our life-time.

Dearest Lotte, how much one can do for oneself, and how little for others! The wish to be of use to one's fellowmen is almost never gratified. Most things that concern myself I have brought to the pitch of good fortune, or I can at least see my way to it in the future. For others I work myself to the bone and achieve nothing, whereas for myself I hardly have to stir a finger and it is all handed to me on a cushion.

Mambres, the sage,* is feeding on his own thoughts; you shall hear everything when happier hours bring me back to you.

On my way I had a good deal to put up with on account of the gale, but I am glad I am completely indifferent to any inconvenience once I see it has to be, and that there is some point in what I am undertaking. Anything pointless makes me wild, and I have sworn it undying enmity.

At the Duke's† I saw an exquisitely coloured Raphael engraving. Though this kind of copy is always far from perfect, it stirred some quite new thoughts in me. If you could only see it too!

Good-night, my dearest. I am glad to be able to go to bed at a sensible hour and without having dined.

3rd April, evening.

This letter must go, so only a word of greeting to-day. Enclosed a sample of the current style here.

* From Voltaire's 'Le taureau blanc'.

† Of Saxe-Gotha.

At Bechtoldsheim's I ate a large meal, for I was hungry and the food was good. Now for this evening I have an unwelcome late supper at Herda to look forward to. Adieu, dear one. I am sending you the first flowers I have seen; I pounced on them at once.

The people here are readier to enjoy life than those with us; it is the curse which follows eating up the fat of the land that the blessing of content cannot thrive.

Adieu. Heaven's blessing be with you like my love.

139 To Frau VON STEIN

*Tiefenort,
6th April 1782,
Saturday evening.*

It is the old refrain again, dear Lotte, at the end of another day and a change of quarters, I'm sending you a note to assure you that my thoughts have been flying to you in the thousands . . .

A little more about 'Pilate'.* If we tack our own peculiarities and oddities on to the character of a hero and call him Werther, Egmont, Tasso, or anything else, and show him simply for what he is, that's all right. The public's interest is then held in proportion as the writer himself is rich or poor, remarkable or insipid, and this fiction does not pretend to be anything else. Now Hans Caspar finds this method of dramatising (as it is called) delightful, and he patches together a garment like this for his Christ, and then tacks on to it the birth and death of all men, *Alpha* and *Omega*, redemption and salvation. In my opinion the result is intolerable and in bad taste. Altogether I am positive that he is over-serious about it, and so will never write a good book of this kind. In works of this nature the author must know what he wants, but he must never dogmatise, he must hint at his meaning and show his intention in a thousand veiled forms, never directly.

It has another fault. He imagines he is a better Christian than Klopstock, but shows 'Klopstockiness' at every turn.

Not to mention his tedious exclaiming, bringing of 'trumping' arguments, and revelling in torment.

Perhaps I am unfair, let's wait till the whole book comes out and hear what others say . . .

To me he seems like someone explaining at some length that the earth is not an exact sphere but flattened at the two poles, proving

* By Hans Caspar Lavater.

all this in the strictest fashion, and persuading me that he holds the very latest, most explicit and accurate ideas about astronomy and the structure of the world. What would you say then if this man were to add: 'Finally I must mention the chief thing, namely that this world, whose shape we have so precisely represented, rests on the back of a tortoise and would otherwise sink into the depths.'

Forgive the comparison, but I see in the works of Lavater the greatest human intelligence joined to the crassest superstition by a thread as fast as it is fine.

Forgive my invectives; whenever he renews his attacks on our kingdom, we must at least *protestando* defend ourselves.

Good-night, Lotte. Farewell, my dear Certainty, dearest dream of my life.

Sunday, 7th, early.

A hussar is taking this to Eisenach. Perhaps you'll receive it before the letter the Duke is taking with him. The crocuses, liver-worths and gooseberry shoots give me friendly looks, and how much more will they do it on the 18th! Please! Please!

140 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
[From the Frauenplan,]
2nd June 1782.*

I am writing for the first time from my new address, to send you what you have so often received from the old one, a morning-greeting and the assurance of my love. It makes no difference at all to me where I am, so long as I live near to you. Enclosed a bundle of asparagus which I hope to have at lunch with you. Adieu, L., I shall see you soon.

141 To CARL AUGUST

*Weimar,
16th June 1782.*

Many thanks, my dear Prince, for your letter. You will have received mine and the hussar will perhaps bring me an answer. This letter ought to reach you at Sonneberg.

First of all, I hope you make the most of this fine weather, just the right thing to present the old mountains at their best . . .

The Duchess dined here with me on Saturday; the baby came

too and begged: dear Waldner, let's stay! She sat with us on the balcony at dinner and enjoyed it all. This morning Frau von Stein gave the Duchess breakfast in my garden.

I spent a wonderful morning yesterday. I got up at half past three. My garden has an indescribable charm for me since it has become what it was meant to be, a refuge.

I am settling into my new house, and while I get everything into splendid order, I go over my life again, comparing its stages and fixing the characteristic qualities of the present one. It seems to afford good hope and prospects. I can't tell you how much easier the new arrangement makes my work; I can do twice as much in the same time and with the same effort . . .

Among Rousseau's works there are really delightful letters on botany; he explains this science to a lady in the clearest and prettiest way; it really is a pattern of how one ought to instruct, and a supplement to 'Emil'. So I am taking this occasion to recommend the beautiful realm of flowers to my fair friends once more . . .

The hussar has just brought your letter. My best wishes for your journey. So this letter is certain to find you in Sonneberg. I'm sure you will have paid my compliments to the charming girl and to all the fair ladies when you had the chance . . .

142 To Frau VON STEIN

12th July 1782.

I'll soon be where my heart is day and night.

143 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
27th July 1782.

It's so long since I wrote to you, I don't know if I am repeating myself or missing something out. You will have heard more from others. You will already know that Kalb has gone, so that burden falls on me too. Every day, I look deeper into it. I realise more and more how necessary this step was.

As a man of business he has behaved tolerably, as a politician badly and as a person abominably. I can separate these three on paper, of course, but in life they are one and the same; so just imagine what it has been like. I know you can, but you don't need to; it's all over now anyway.

And now I shall have to sacrifice two whole years from mid-summer on; then when the threads are at least sorted, I can

with honour either stay or resign. But I am not looking to left or right, and my old motto will always stand over the door of any new office of mine:

‘Hic est aut nusquam, quod quærimus.’

I am happier than I was, however, for here at least I am no longer obliged to wish for what is good and only half do it, while detesting what is bad and having to suffer it all. What happens is now my responsibility and it affects me directly, not at third or fourth hand in some obscure fashion. It's a great help that I worked so hard in the past, for now I have a clear-cut picture of almost all essentials and details, so the rest is easy.

You can well imagine I don't mention this to anyone, so please make no use of it, even to my advantage. People judge these events differently, and what I must do I must do.

My time is so taken up, it is very fortunate that their Highnesses lead an easy simple life themselves at Court; one can live in peace and even enjoy the few hours spent in society. I have been writing an operetta for Tiefert, ‘Die Fischerin’; the performance was good and a success . . .

144 To LAVATER

*Weimar,
9th August 1782.*

You and I would agree in a quarter of an hour if I were standing before you. We come as close as two men can, then turn and go our opposite ways, you with as firm a step as I. We reach our furthest bounds, each of us alone and without thinking of the other. I turn quietly round, silent about what God and nature reveal to me, and suddenly I see you powerfully preaching your ideas. The distance between us then suddenly becomes real; I lose the Lavater whose feelings and ideas swept me along when I was near him, the Lavater I know and love. I see only the sharp lines traced by his flaming sword, and for the moment it gives me a very unpleasant feeling. This is very human, though rather vague.

You hold the Gospels as they stand to be divine truth; but not even a voice from Heaven would convince me that water burns and fire quenches, that a virgin bears a child and that a man rises from the dead. No, for me these are blasphemies against the Great God and His revelation in nature. You find nothing more beautiful than the Gospels; I find thousands of records written in all ages by

men inspired by God just as beautiful and useful, indispensable to mankind. And so on!

Be assured dear brother, I am as much in earnest about my beliefs as you are about yours. If I had to express myself publicly, I would speak and write about what I believe to be this God-inspired aristocracy as zealously as you write of the Kingdom of Christ. And then I would have to maintain the opposite of much that your 'Pilate' categorically lays down as indisputable.

Exclusive intolerance!

Forgive the harsh expression. I should like to say the intolerance is in your book, not in you; but that might only embroil us again.

Lavater with his fellow-men, in his attitude to writers, is the kindest, most tolerant of beings. Lavater as teacher of an exclusive religion, devoted to it body and soul, whatever name you give it—you even admit it yourself.

It is not a matter here of exclusion, as if nothing else existed or were of any importance; it is a matter of banishment to where the dogs feed off the crumbs from the rich man's table and have to find healing and comfort in the more troubled waters of the everlasting streams and the leaves that have fallen from the tree of life.

Forgive me, I do not speak resentfully. Your 'Pilate' is exclusive from beginning to end, and you intended it should be so. As I read your 'who dares?', 'who can?' etc. a calm or perhaps unwilling 'I do' often escaped me! Believe me, I often wanted to talk with you at length and in a kindly way of your book; I wrote a good deal about it, but I couldn't send it, for how can one man understand another!

Let me soften the harshness of the word 'intolerance'. People cannot hold such different opinions without coming into conflict. I admit, if I were to teach my religion, you might perhaps have more cause to blame my lack of tolerance than I have to blame yours.

Take away this alien spirit with words that breathe kindness over me; the alien spirit blows from every quarter, but that of love and friendship comes only from one.

The Prince [of Dessau] brought me a whiff of your paradise clinging to his clothes. I wrote to you that same day; you will have got my letter by now.

145 To Frau VON STEIN

9th August 1782.

I can only give you Army bread* for your cake, but love for love.

* Due to Goethe as part of his salary as the Head of the Army Commission.

Of course, I'll come to lunch and draw joy from your presence. We may perhaps write a little this afternoon. At the moment Cervantes is my life-jacket in a sea of official papers. Adieu, my best and only Lotte.

146 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
10th August 1782.*

This morning I finished the chapter in 'Wilhelm Meister' which I had begun dictating to you. I spent a happy hour doing it. I feel I am born to be a writer. To write something that expresses my thoughts well is a source of purer joy to me than ever. Farewell. Take care of yourself, soul of my life, of all I do and write.

147 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
26th August 1782.*

The melons simply won't ripen, so this letter is still here.

When I have worked for a day and can't come to you in the evening, I am at a loss to know what all the trouble has been for.

I have spent the day quite alone, while there was a banquet in Tiefurt and a gathering with the beautiful Countess and the absurd Counts.

I find it hard to write to you, I am so used to talking to you at length, telling you all I am thinking. Everything crowds upon my mind at once and I want to say it all.

27th August, morning.

Dear Lotte, do come back! Soon I shan't know why I get up.

Evening.

There was a general frostiness in the air under the tent this evening. By eight I was on my way home. The stars stood above your house, and your windows were not lit. These same stars used to guide me so well. I crept through the Ackerwand* and now I am with you.

Can I hope to have you home on Thursday?

Prince [August]† is a very sensible and good fellow; one can to

* This lane led to the garden of Goethe's house on the Frauenplan; the Stein's house stood further down the lane.

† Of Gotha.

some extent talk and be with him. I am sending you a pleasing essay of his on Rousseau. He is extraordinarily humble, has a very sound instinct and is without princely whims.

Our Duchess is as pleasant as it is possible to be; the Duke's all right and one could be very fond of him, but he spoils all social intercourse with his rough manners, and his recklessness reduces his friends to indifference about him.

It is a strange feeling indeed to see in daily jeopardy the neck, arms and legs of the closest friend to whom fate has joined me, and to be philosophical about it without becoming indifferent. Yet he may grow to be old and grey, while prudent men die off.

Good-night, Lotte dear. It is my birthday to-morrow. I mean to end and begin, as always, with you.

148 To F. JACOBI

*Weimar,
2nd October 1782.*

Dear Fritz, let me call you that once more, for the last time, if you would have it so. Then we can at least part in peace.

The Schlossers have been staying with you; I hope you had a very happy time. On their way back they mentioned to my Mother that I still owe you some money.

In those days you helped me out of a difficult position, and I don't want to make excuses for not having mentioned the matter for so long. First I hadn't got the money, then I forgot about it, then I put it off, and especially since you have been displeased with me,* I couldn't bring myself to write of it. Now I am glad indeed that it is going to be settled. My Mother will see to it. I honestly don't remember how much it was and what it may amount to now, so she will write to you. Settle it with her, and accept my hearty thanks for it and for all the kindness you have shown me.

One gets older, the world grows smaller, and then one is often amazed to think of the days when for the sake of a pastime one flings friends away, and in heedless gaiety neither feels nor cares to heal the wounds one inflicts.

I am happy and I hope you are too.

If you have no friendly answer for me, please send none at all; just finish up the business with my Mother, and I shall take that as my answer. Adieu. Greetings to your family.

* Because Goethe had made fun of Jacobi's sentimental novel 'Woldemar' at an entertainment at Court.

I have not yet been able to thank you for all your kindness. Even now I am not sufficiently collected to send you anything of my own. You must be used to others always benefitting from you.

The short description of the people you met on your journey [through the Rhineland] gave me new light on many an old acquaintance and a glance at some new ones. What you say of the Prince of Dessau still further confirms my relation to that worthy man. So far we have not meant anything to one another and I grow less and less inclined to meet even good and worthy people; it is enough for me that they exist somewhere and that one does not fail to appreciate them as so often happens.

I very much enjoyed the first part of your confessions as I call them. It is always most interesting to read something like this. But I noticed again that the reader has often to make what I might call his own psychological calculations to draw his conclusions from the facts. I cannot at the moment explain more than this; what a man notices and feels about himself seems to me the least part of him. He is more inclined to see what he lacks than what he has, to remark what worries than what delights him and enlarges his mind. Soul and body forget about themselves when things are pleasant and happy, and they are only reminded of themselves again by something unpleasant. A man writing of himself and his past will therefore mostly note what is cramping and painful. As he does so he seems to shrivel up as a person, and we have to put in a tincture of what we have seen of his actions or read of his writings to get a picture of the man as perhaps he really is or was. This is one of my many, many reflections.

I am very glad that in your letter you outlined the essentials of your religion for me once more. We shall soon be clear about this and then we shall be able to let it rest. We owe nature a great deal for having given healing-power to each living creature, enabling it to mend itself if it is hurt in one part or another. And what are all the thousand different religions but a thousand expressions of this healing-power? My plaster is no good to you, nor yours to me; in our Father's dispensary are many medicines. So I have nothing to say to your letter, nothing to refute, but much to set against it. We ought to write down our creeds in two columns some day, and then sign a pact of peace and tolerance.

I have written to-day to Tischbein [about the help he hopes to

get from the Duke of Gotha], and have referred him to you. You will probably understand my letter, though not fully. I can neither give nor get him what he wants; the Duke of Gotha has other views and principles, and I can do nothing more about the matter. Do urge him to be specially diplomatic with Reifenstein; he has influence with the great. Of course to good Tischbein who, thank heaven, is not yet practised in worldly affairs, this sort of relationship may seem extremely vexatious and unbearable; however it is better in any case that he should know this kind of thing in advance and to a certain extent accommodate himself to it, than that he should go on in his own way and we then have trouble when half a year is over. In any event it will not go off quite smoothly; you know better than anyone, my dear brother, how when men have dealings with one another, there is always more or less friction. The older one grows the surer one foresees the how and where, and yet, much as one would like to do so, one can prevent it neither in one's own nor in another's case. Urge him above all to leave, for the Duke is already displeased at his indecision and at my ready words on his behalf. We can go on bargaining among ourselves, but a ruler must be obeyed. They are not all like the Duke of Weimar who lets every man do what is right in his own way and at the same time shows interest. Adieu brother. You say there is no religion without contact: without contact there is no friendship. Farewell, with my love, old Christian, and my greetings to Bäbe.

150 To Frau VON STEIN

*Weimar,
7th November 1782.*

It is seven years to-day since I came here. May this day begin a new epoch in my life and my being, in which to please you more and more. A thousand thoughts are going to and from you. O my beloved, man's fate is inscrutable.

I am sending you the map you have missed; there is not a spot on it or belonging to it where I would not think of you with love and constancy. Farewell, be to me now and always what you are, all and everything.

I expect you this evening.

Ought I to invite the Countess* and Bode, to play the complacent host to them too?

* Countess C. G. Bernstorff, née Buchwald.

Weimar,
17th November 1782.

A thousand thanks for your letter. It was a great joy and will bring me blessing. I cannot write much, so I am sending you 'Iphigenie', though not for itself or as a worthy fulfilment of those past hopes. It is rather so that my spirit can tell yours how in the midst of miserable distractions this play has given me four weeks of quiet intercourse with higher beings. I hope you don't dislike the strange costume and the unaccustomed speech, and that you grow to like Iphigenie herself.

Greetings to your family and take care of yourself too. There's nothing much to say of my life here. My fate is the same here too. I suffer where others enjoy and enjoy where they suffer. I can't tell you all I have endured, and I am heartily glad you have confidence in me. Let me use a simile: when you see a glowing mass of iron in the forge, you don't think there's so much slag in it until it is hammered. The impurities that even the fire could not isolate, are only then separated; they flow and are dispersed in molten drops and sparks, and the worker is left with the pure metal in his tongs.

My nature seems to have needed a mighty hammer like this to free it from all the slag, and to purify my heart.

And, ah, how many, many impurities I know still lie hidden there!

Farewell. Send me back 'Iphigenie' when you have read it . . .

Weimar,
21st November 1782.

I'm very sorry for you; it is miserable to be quite alone, and even your good sister being there, makes you lonelier still. It is sad to see a friend in this state; that's when one feels really helpless.

I have been very happy lately. I hardly go out at all; I attend to my business and in my leisure hours I write down the fairy-tales I have always been accustomed to tell myself. You will soon be getting the first three books of ['Wilhelm Meister's'] *Theatralische Sendung*; I am having a copy made.

I have gone through my 'Werther' and I am having a copy written out from the book again. It seems he is entering a second time into his mother's womb, and you shall see him after he is born

* In Nuremberg.

again. I am very collected now and so I feel confident about this delicate and dangerous task of re-writing.

All the letters I have received since 1772 and a great many papers of that period were lying here in fairly neat bundles; I have been sorting them out and am having them stitched together. What a sight! Sometimes it seems almost too much for me. But I won't give up; I want to see these ten years before me, as if I were looking back from a hill down a long valley.

My present mood makes this both bearable and possible, and like a sign from fate. In every respect it marks a stage in my life.

I see almost nobody but those who come on business. I have quite severed my political and social life from my philosophical and poetical one—outwardly, of course—and this suits me very well. I give a large tea-party once a week, from which no one is excluded, and discharge my duty to society like this with the least expense. My varied occupations, which fortunately still impress the public, excuse me from visiting. I spend the evenings with Frau von Stein and have no secrets from her. I sometimes see the Dowager Duchess, etc.

The Duke lives for coursing and hunting. Things jog along quite well; he shows a fair amount of ready interest in them, and now and then real keenness for something useful, planting, up-rooting and so on. The Duchess goes on quietly, living the life of the Court. I seldom see either of them.

I am beginning to live my own life once more and to know myself again. I have quite given up the dream that the good seeds that are ripening in my own life and those of my friends could be sown here, or that heavenly jewels like these could be set in the earthly crowns of princes. Having given up this dream has restored my former happiness. It never occurred to me at home to connect visits of spirits with the practice of law; in the same way I now keep separate the Privy Councillor and that other self of mine of which the Privy Councillor has no need. And only in the innermost parts of my plans and projects and undertakings do I remain mysteriously true to myself, and that binds together my social, political, philosophical and poetical life in a hidden knot. *Sapienti sat.*

I am telling you a lot about myself for you are fond of me and like to hear it and besides I want you to do the same.

Cosmogony and the newest discoveries about it, mineralogy and now my concern with agriculture, in fact the whole of natural

philosophy—it all surrounds me like Bacon's great 'House of Salomon' that Herder and Nicolai argue about. Farewell. Oeser was here. I'm just getting to know him properly. A man full of taste and intelligence and the calm wisdom of the artist and the man of the world . . .

Farewell. I'll have to do without you for ever if you won't come back till we all live in harmony here and you won't accept wearing the same Court dress as a sign of harmony. Adieu.

153 To Frau VON STEIN

21st November 1782.

I have been with you since early this morning. Neither life nor death, neither poetry nor reading official documents can separate me from you. I welcome the snow's coming, it reminds me of last winter and many a scene of your friendly kindness. Farewell, sweet dream of my life, opiate against my woes. I'm giving a tea party to-morrow.

154 To Frau VON STEIN

24th November 1782.

Here, Lotte dear, is a medley of things, old and new. You my ever-new one!

155 To A. F. OESER *

Weimar,
30th January 1783.

I am late with my thanks, my dear Professor, and yet they are as warmly felt as when I most reluctantly left Leipzig. You made my stay as agreeable and useful to me as could be; I am always richer for being with you.

I have been like the Children of Israel, though, when they left Egypt. You will miss a number of things, among them a large brush I have appropriated without fear or remorse. If we have the good fortune to see you here in the spring, I will show you everything I have painted with it. The colours are mixed, the technique is being practised, but, alas, it is still the little frames I am best at in this kind of work . . .

* After Goethe and the Duke had spent a few days in Leipzig.

*Weimar,
August 1782 or
April-May 1783.*

Corona Schröter sang the Pergolesi *Salve Regina* magnificently; my thoughts were with you.

My life without you would be as meaningless as music without the human voice.

We shall both begin another day to-morrow. If you go to Belvedere, I'll stay quietly at home. Let me hear from you. Adieu, a thousand times.

*Weimar,
24th June 1783.*

Here at last, Lotte dear, is a copy of 'Werther' and of the Lotte that foreshadowed you. I like the English one* very well; what I have read of it is rendered feelingly, sensibly and with taste. I could learn still more from it if it were translated from the German.† Really it is very pleasant to read my own thoughts in the language of my teachers . . .

*Ilmenau,
3rd September 1783.*

I will send you the money when I get back to Weimar. Do please keep calm, it is better for your state of mind to live in a quiet place.

You have already done me some service and there are sure to be further occasions. I have no favours to hand out, nor am I so fickle in my good-will. Farewell; enjoy what little you have in peace.

*Weimar,
7th December 1783.*

Dear Mother, I am so glad to see from your letter that you are well and are enjoying life as much as may be. You will soon get

* Of 1779 3rd edition 1782.

† It was made from a French translation.

the Fourth Book of 'Wilhelm Meister'; I can recommend him to you, he will fit in with your other theatrical likings . . .

Frau Betty Jacobi has acted most wrongly and against all motherly feelings in spoiling even a moment of your time with such gossip about me. You have never known me with a fat face or tummy; besides it's only natural that serious matters make one serious, especially when one is thoughtful by nature and wants to do what is good and right in the world.

How delighted you would have been if during that bad winter of 1769 you had been shown the future in a mirror; if you had known that they shall yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria and the tabrets be heard.

So let us gladly accept these years as a gift—indeed our whole life is one—and let us be thankful for every added year.

I am as well as can be, I can manage my affairs, enjoy the society of good friends and still have time and energy for more than one favourite occupation. I can neither recall nor imagine a better spot, now I know the world and am not ignorant of what lies beyond the mountains.

And as for you, take pleasure in the life I am living, even if I should leave the world before you. I have not disgraced you. I leave good friends and a good name behind me, so it can be your best comfort to know that I do not die entirely.

Don't worry meanwhile; fate may yet grant us a delightful old age together, and we'll live it out thankfully . . .

I don't know if I have told you already that I have staying with me the son of my very dear friend Frau von Stein? He is ten years old, a good and charming child, and gives me many a happy hour, making my thoughtful and earnest ways a little gayer. He went to the Harz with me . . .

160 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
18th January 1784.

This morning I dictated some of my article on granite. I kept thinking of my beloved and remembering how from every rock-summit my longing had gone back to my dear one's house. I expect I shall be drawn again to Court this evening by you. At mid-day I sent a refusal. Farewell. Fritz was so clever and good.

161 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
18th March 1784.

I hope to have a word from you, my dearest, before I meet the august Estates face to face; it will be like a pinch of salt to season and make palatable the whole brew of my acts and accounts. I'll be with you this afternoon. And you shall also sweeten my ordeal at the theatre to-night.

162 To HERDER

Jena,
27th March 1784.

I must hurry, as the Gospels tell us to do, to let you know a piece of good fortune that has come my way. I have found not gold or silver, but what fills me with inexpressible joy—

the os intermaxillare in man!

Loder and I compared the skulls of men and animals, found traces of it—and see, there it is. But don't give a hint of this to anyone, I beg you; I must go secretly to work. You too should be thoroughly delighted, for it is like the key-stone in man; it's not missing, it's there! How indeed! I have thought how well it will fit in with the whole of your ideas too. Farewell. I'll come on Sunday evening. Don't answer this, the messenger would find me gone. Saturday night.

163 To Frau VON STEIN

Eisenach,
7th June 1784.

. . . To my great joy the elephant's skull has arrived here from Cassel, and what I was looking for is even more readily visible than I had expected. I keep the thing hidden in the farthest room, to avoid being thought quite mad. My landlady thinks the huge packing-case has china in it.

We are very nicely and comfortably lodged here. Your Fritz is well and happy. The Princes in Gotha gave him a big kite which we brought with us in the carriage.

All really proper people are horrified at a rumour that Voltaire's 'Mémoires', which I mentioned to you, are to be published. I am very glad you'll be able to read them soon. I am to get one of the first copies and I'll send it on to you at once.

You will find it is like a god (say Momus), but some mean god, writing about a king and what is great in the world. That is characteristic of all Voltaire's witty writings and it is very obvious in these pages. Not a drop of human blood, not a speck of compassion or common decency. But at the same time a lightness, an intellectual brilliance, a sureness, that are a delight. I say 'intellectual brilliance', not greatness. He is like a balloon that soars above everything because of its special air, and sees below flat stretches where we see mountains.

Farewell, Lotte dear. Now I'll waste some hours from a sense of duty, and then towards evening I hope to take a delightful stroll, thinking of you more than is good for me.

Surely you must feel how I love you.

Every letter of this note will tell you so.

164 To S. T. SÖMMERING*

*Eisenach,
9th June 1784.*

You have given me great pleasure by sending me the elephant's skull. It has arrived here safely and I am keeping it in a small room, secretly devoting to it what moments I can steal, for I daren't do anything to show that a monster like this has made its way into the house.

I should like to take it back to Weimar and return it from there by the beginning of September at latest, unless you need it before then. I am very anxious to compare it with a large skull in our collection and with other animal skulls, especially as my hope has been realised of finding most of the sutures etc. not yet grown together. You who have devoted yourself entirely to this science will readily understand what an attraction it has for me, though I positively have only moments to devote to it. It would indeed be a pleasure for me to give you an account some day of my modest endeavours.

We have sent up a balloon in Weimar, of the Montgolfier type, 42 ft. high and 20 ft. in maximum diameter. It is a beautiful sight, but it won't stay in the air for long because we don't want to risk using fire to help. The first time it covered in about four minutes a stretch which usually takes fifteen, the second time it did not stay up as long as that; it will be sent up soon again. . . .

* An anatomist in Cassel.

Eisenach,
17th June 1784.

. . . My letters will have shown you how lonely I am. I don't dine at Court, I see few people, and take my walks alone, and at every beautiful spot I wish you were there. I can't help loving you more than is good for me; I shall feel all the happier when I see you again.

I am always conscious of my nearness to you, your presence never leaves me. In you I have a measure for every woman, for everyone; in your love a measure for all that is to be. Not in the sense that the rest of the world seems obscure to me, on the contrary, your love makes it clear; I see quite clearly what men are like and what they plan, wish, do and enjoy; I don't grudge them what they have, and comparing is a secret joy to me, possessing as I do such an imperishable treasure.

You in your household must feel as I often do in my affairs; we often don't notice objects simply because we don't choose to look at them, but things acquire an interest as soon as we see clearly the way they are related to each other. For we always like to join in, and the good man takes pleasure in arranging, putting in order and furthering the right and its peaceful rule.

The elephant's skull is coming with me to Weimar.

My rock-studies are going very well . . .

Fritz is happy and good. Without noticing it, he is taken into the world, and so without knowing it, he will become familiar with it. It is still all a game to him; yesterday I got him to read some petitions and give me summaries of them; he laughed like anything and wouldn't believe that people could be in such straits as these petitioners made out.

Adieu, you whom I love a thousand times.

Weimar,
30th October 1784.

I am glad, my dear Knebel, that you arrived safely and are not forgetting us. My best wishes for this changing to and fro between solitude and the company of friends.

It's nearly ten years since you walked into my room and we first met. That was the starting point of so many wonderful things!

* In Jena. From then on he lived partly there and partly in Ilmenau.

You are like the morning star of my day here. We cannot call a single hour of these years back again; let us take up what they have brought us, what remains, and let us use and enjoy it till night falls.

I am sending Loder an osteological essay; when it is more finished you shall see it too. I had to get these ideas off my mind somehow; they have been with me too long already.

If only you too could be seized by a love of natural philosophy in some form or other. You could devote yourself so well to it. I myself was lured on by spirits and trapped in it; spirits have sometimes chosen to do this with me in the past.

I could foresee the impression your new title [of 'Major'] would make in Jena, and that's why I approved of it. It'll be a good thing, especially as you won't attach much meaning to it either.

The Duke, who'll be in Strassburg at the moment, sends greetings. So do Frau von Stein and Fritz. Farewell.

167 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
17th November 1784.

Here at long last is my essay on anatomy. Do let me know what you think of it. So far I have not mentioned the conclusion Herder hinted at already in his 'Ideas', that no detail reveals a difference between man and the animals. In the contrary, man is very closely related to them. What determines any creature is the harmony of its parts, and man is man by the shape and nature of his upper jaw as much as by the shape and nature of the smallest joint of his little toe. And each creature is only a note *a nuance* in one great harmony, which we must study as a whole, or the detail will remain meaningless. My little work is written from this point of view which forms the real interest hidden in it.

I could make it clearer if I could give more time to comparative anatomy and natural philosophy. But, alas, I can only glance at nature, and one can't expect to do anything without studying the writers in these subjects. I shall have to save that up till I am pensioned off by fate or retire.

Farewell. Give the portfolio to Loder and see I have it back soon. Tell me what you are studying.

Farewell, my dear fellow.

It would be a good thing if we could get hold of some interested friendly correspondent in Holland.

I have just got your letter; thanks for your care and love.

I am glad that something human has arrived from foreign parts, and I wish you more and more joy and pleasure in your growing knowledge of nature.

In old times, when man lived close to the ground it was a blessing to point out the heavens to him and to remind him of spiritual things; now it is more of a blessing to lead him back to earth and to moderate the elasticity of his anchored balloons a little. Farewell and love me.

Herder is at work on the Anthology, very happy translating and very happy in his translations.

No word from the Duke. I take it he is in Zurich.

168 To Frau CAROLINE HERDER

*Weimar,
3rd December 1784.*

Here is what is left over from these last festive days. I hope it reaches you in time; though my essay on bones, which I am sending your husband, is more appropriate to a fast day. Ask him, please, to look through my translation.* I am ashamed to bother him so often with this trifle. Chickens would surely be dear if hens sat on their eggs as long as I fuss about these things before finishing with them. Adieu.

169 To ERNST II, Duke of GOTHA

*Weimar,
20th December 1784.*

At last I am in the position to send your Highness the little essay recently mentioned.† I should hardly have ventured to do this, had I not been confident that your Highness would value even a slight attempt, if it served to throw more light on a useful branch of knowledge.

I shall now wait to hear what the experts think of a layman imagining he has made a discovery in so well known a region. So I have said nothing of any further possible perspectives that might open up in this way, as I do not want to be already suspected because I am making hypotheses . . .

I myself am amazed how gradually my attention has settled in

* In Latin, for publication abroad.

† On the Os Intermaxillare.

the realm of stones and bones, almost without my noticing it. All things in nature are so closely linked together that once one enters the stream it bears one on and on . . .

Perhaps your Highness will be kind enough after looking through my little work to pass it on to his Highness your brother . . .

170 To CARL AUGUST*

Weimar,
26th December 1784.

Your kindly letter, my dear Prince, put an end to my worry and I am glad indeed that you did not resent my refusal,† for I was convinced that for several reasons I could not leave here. I hope all you do and see on your journey will be to your use and benefit.

I don't in the least grudge you your pleasure in hunting, but I hope that in return, when you are back again, you will deliver your people from the fear of an evil threatening them. I mean the destructive inhabitants of the Ettersberg. I am reluctant to mention these animals,‡ I protested at the very beginning against their being housed there, so it looks like obstinacy for me to be launching another attack on them. It is only the requests from all sides that induce me to break what was almost a vow of silence; and I prefer to write, for it will be one of the first things submitted to you when you return. I'll say nothing of the damage itself nor of what a herd like this means to the district; I will only mention the impression it makes on the people. I have never known anything so universally condemned; there is only one opinion on the matter. Landowners, tenants, subjects, servants and even the huntsmen are all united in their wish to see these guests put down. The Erfurt Government has handed ours a note on the subject.

What struck me most and what I am glad to mention is the opinion people expressed about you. Most of them are simply amazed as though the creatures had fallen like hail from the skies. Many don't put this evil down to you, others do so reluctantly. All are at one in thinking that the fault lies with those who make no protest but in their false complaisance prevent you from seeing the harm that is being done. Nobody imagines that it could possibly be some passion that has led you into such an error, making and carrying

* Who was on his way home from Switzerland.

† To meet him in Frankfort.

‡ A herd of wild boars.

out a decision so absolutely opposed to the rest of your thinking and actions, your known intentions and wishes.

The commissioner for the district has told me to my face it is impossible, and I believe he would have completely denied the creatures' existence if a whole row of new trees near Lützendorf had not been uprooted and laid flat with their supporting stakes the night after they were planted.

If my wishes could be met, these sworn enemies of all cultivation would be quietly and gradually sacrificed for the banquetting-table without the fuss of a hunt. Then when the spring-sun shines, the people living near the Ettersberg would be able to look happily out over their fields again.

The countryman's state is described as pitiable, and so it is, when one thinks of all the evils he has to fight. I do not wish to add anything, for you know it already. I have seen you renounce more than one thing, and I hope you will make a New Year's present of this passion to your subjects. And for the distress of mind that this colony has caused me since it was established, I ask only for the skull of the mother of the whole hated brood, to display it with double joy among my anatomical collection.

I hope this page I have just written will come into your hands at a propitious moment . . .

The public attention is fixed at present on Frau von der Recke; their judgement differs with the different standpoints from which they view this lovely object, which also may have different sides. I have nothing to say about her myself, as I have seen her once only. But everyone says when you return you will court the lady (to use a commonplace expression) and that the lady would not be disinclined to reciprocate such princely attentions. She is indeed a pattern of virtue and propriety (in spite of a mode of dress which frequently appears unusual and seemed even to Wieland to reveal too much). Yet she has confessed that her heart has already played her tricks in the past and that she is a particular friend and admirer of princes who have not ceased to be human.

We are working eagerly to arrange a sleigh-party, but the various views are not yet reconciled . . .

The Duchess is as well as can be expected and I saw the little Prince yesterday, happily crawling about in the hall.

Count Morelli is still doing his best to make himself agreeable, an easy task for such an easy-going person.

I'm sending this to Eisenach, as it might otherwise miss you.

Welcome home again, then; may you come back well and happy to the circle that after all is and remains your nearest.

171 To FRITZ VON STEIN*

Jena,
10th March 1785.

If I were a first rate poet like you, I would answer you in verse. But my whole nature is now so prosaic, you must be content with prose. Your fable is a great deal better now, and your favourite metre goes quite well without rhyme. Farewell. I'll soon be back.

172 To F. JACOBI†

Ilmenau,
9th June 1785.

We got your essay and read it some time ago. I reproach Herder and myself for the delay in our reply. You must excuse us; I at any rate very much dislike discussing a subject like this in writing; in fact I find it almost impossible.

We agreed from the very beginning that the idea you give of Spinoza's philosophy comes very much nearer to our own than what you said to us had led us to expect. If we could talk it over together, I think we should soon be in complete agreement.

You acknowledge the supreme reality which is the basis of all Spinozism, the foundation and source of everything. He does not prove the existence of God; existence *is* God. And though others therefore miscall him Atheist, I name and praise him as Theissimum even Christianissimum.

I had begun a letter to you a fortnight ago; and then I took a copy of your essay with me to Ilmenau. I kept looking into it, but something seemed to hold me by the sleeve whenever I tried to write to you. And now your warrant has been sent on to me and its mere seal weighs on my conscience.

Forgive me for liking to be silent when one speaks of a Divine Being. I can see Him only in and through *rebus singularibus*. No one can stir me to closer and deeper reflection on them than Spinoza, although every individual thing seems to vanish before his gaze.

I cannot say that I have ever read right through this great man's works, or even surveyed in my mind the whole structure of his thought. My way of thinking and living does not allow me to

* Aged 12.

† Who had sent his essay on Spinoza.

do so. But when I read him, I feel I understand him, I mean, he never to my mind is inconsistent, and so he helps me greatly in my own way of thinking and acting.

I find it hard, therefore, to compare what you say of him with himself. With him language and thought are so closely linked that I at least feel one is saying something quite different if one does not use his exact words. You can see how often you yourself have had to quote whole passages from him. You use a different order and different words to express his philosophy and I feel this is bound to break the real sequence of his most subtle ideas.

Forgive me for not having anything more or better to say; I have never laid claim to any skill in metaphysics; I shall ask Herder to-day to write, and hope he will do better.

Here I am among hills and inside them, seeking the Divine Being *in herbis* and *lapidibus*.

Knebel, Voigt and Fritz are here too; there is plenty to do and work goes well for we all enjoy it together.

I am off to Carlsbad soon. I am sure to be home by the end of August, if only Princess Gallitzin does not arrive too soon with her companions. So write to me at Carlsbad, your letter is certain to reach me there by the middle of next month, and I shall make my plans accordingly, for I mean after taking the waters to visit the Erzgebirge. Farewell; love to your family.

173 To G. T. WEBER *

Weimar,
26th August 1785.

Honoured Sir, a man called Krafft, for a short time resident under your jurisdiction, has recently died. His circumstances were known only to me; I have given him assistance, especially latterly, and have arranged for his burial.

I would therefore request you, Sir, to deliver the deceased's small estate to the bearer of this letter, my Secretary Philipp Seidel, when all has been settled in accordance with his instructions. I am certain that there will be no-one to make any claim on the deceased, so I can all the more easily assure His Highness's Office in Jena that I would at any time uphold its handing over to me this small personal estate.

I have the honour . . .

* Magistrate in Jena.

174 To CHRISTINE, Countess BRÜHL* *Weimar,*
1st September 1785.

Here I am, charming Tina, beginning to keep my word without quite knowing how to finish.

Some moments are so rich; even eternity seems scarcely able to fulfil all the hope and promise in them. It is above all the happy moments of youth that have this advantage; they are short and delicious, like those, too, which the gods give us sometimes when they renew our youth.

I am sending you the works of a well-known writer who has been favoured by Fortune beyond his deserts and who might have got out of hand, had she not, good mother that she is, prepared him some totally unexpected lessons on his way through life.

I trust the interest you have always appeared to take in him will never grow less.

Keep your kindly feelings towards him and be assured of his sincere gratitude.

175 To FRITZ VON STEIN† *Weimar,*
5th September 1785.

I'm very glad you have arrived safely and been well received. Don't forget old Polonius's advice and everything will go well.

Write at least something every day, so that we know how things are with you. Your Mother is in Kochberg, your Father is here. I am very much alone, busy unpacking the stones from Carlsbad.

Give my love to my Mother, and keep telling her all you can think of. She is not as solemn as I am, so you will feel more at home with her. Enjoy our excellent fruit and do give my love to everybody.

176 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE *Weimar,*
3rd October 1785.

You have done me so many kindnesses, dear Mother, in the course of the year, and I am truly grateful. Your kind welcome to dear

* With a copy of his Works; he had met her in Carlsbad. (Translated from French.)

† Staying with Goethe's mother in Frankfort.

Fritz and your care for him are a joy to me, just done for love of me. You will have found him a charming boy, and now I shall always love to hear what he has to tell of you. If one wants to see through the eyes of others like Swedenborg's Spirits, it's best to choose the eyes of children. He has arrived safe and sound with Herr von Niebecker.

Thank all my friends from me. I am writing myself to Riese. Farewell. I'm sending you something amusing very soon. How did my 'Geschwister' go down?

177 To J. F. KESTNER *

*Weimar,
4th December 1785.*

Since your letter came, my dear Kestner, I can't get over the hard fate that you are bearing with such high courage. Up till now you have been a kind of ideal in my eyes of a man whom moderation and order made contented, and the exemplary life you led with wife and children made a happy reassuring picture. But now the events that have overtaken you bring such sad thoughts to my mind; I find comfort only in your own example. Much remains to a man who is still himself. You may be sure of my heartfelt sympathy, for my varied life has made my old friends dearer still in my eyes. Thank you for writing at length and for never doubting my sympathy. Farewell. Love to Lotte and the children. The baths have done me good and I feel very well.

178 To Frau VON STEIN

*Jena,
12th December 1785.*

Güsfeld is leaving to-morrow morning and he will bring you a few lines, my dear one.

The weather is very fine; the mist coming down reminded me of the beginning of my poem,† here in this valley the idea for it came to me. I wish I could have shown you the charming view here! I've done nothing at my Wilhelm [Meister] but finding a name for one of the characters. But I went almost right through my new opera‡ in my mind while riding up here and made many verses for it; if only I had written them down!

* Who amidst financial difficulties, was now mourning the death of his infant daughter.

† *Die Geheimnisse.*

‡ *Die Ungleichen Hausgenossen*, which remained a fragment.

At Loder's I learned of new observations on the gastric juices, and I read Hill's article on the flowers that produce fresh flowers from their midst. If one only had a special head for scientific matters!

Farewell, sweet one. I love you alone. Adieu.

179 To Frau VON STEIN

14th January 1786.

Here, my dear, are some sweets and flowers, symbols of the sweetness and beauty of my love for you.

Are you going to your brother's to-day? He has sent me an invitation.

180 To CARL AUGUST

Weimar,
30th April 1786.

I have spoken to Eichhorn, Griesbach and Loder and they all agree in desiring your Highness to decide on the following step:

They consider that your Highness as Duke, as the Sovereign, and as *Rector Magnificentissimus* could issue a provisional order along the following lines without consulting the other Courts. They believe your Highness could do a great deal of good by making occasional use in matters of discipline of your position as *Rector Magnificentissimus*.

Given this, would your Highness then sanction an announcement to the University stating the following:

You have been grieved to hear that the evil of the students' unions is gaining ground every day, and it is your will that serious steps be taken against them.

The University is, therefore, to direct the Vice-Rector to consult the University Supreme Council, strengthened *ad hunc actum* by four commissioners (whose names are to be given), and to proceed against such unions.

Students suspected of membership are to be summoned and required to state on oath, if they are not members of any students' union, that they will never join one, and if they are already members, that they will immediately renounce and never renew membership.

In addition anything further that the Vice-Rector and his assistants

and commissioners consider appropriate to this aim is to be undertaken and carried through.

Everything to be subject to your Highness's judgement and decision.

181 To F. JACOBI*

Ilmenau,
5th May 1786.

I have been reading your little book with interest but not with pleasure. After all it is a polemic, a philosophical one, and I have a great objection to any kind of literary controversy; I shouldn't enjoy this kind of thing, even if Raphael painted it for me or Shakespeare dramatised it. I can't say more than that. I quite see you had to write this pamphlet and I expected it, but I wish you could have given the *species facti* more simply. I don't approve of emotion in this kind of thing, and all these bits, tacked on, only injure your own case. The briefer the better. You will say that's only my style and each has his own. Well, I can't do anything about that . . .

Self-confidence is bound to become offensive as soon as it leads to contempt of others, even the least important ones. A thoughtless person may mock, humiliate, slight others, for he will expose himself too, but it seems that anyone who respects himself has renounced the right to despise others. And what are we after all that we should set ourselves up so high?

I am delighted that your 'noble *infusiora*' are so successful and that these little things grow up to be a joy to you. I might envy you, if I could bring myself to wish for any good thing that fate has denied or taken from me.

And there is a great deal one might envy you! House, estate, and Pempelfort,† wealth and children, sisters and friends, etc. etc. But in return God has cursed you with Metaphysics to be a thorn in your flesh, while He has blessed me with Physics to gladden me as I look at His works, though it has pleased Him to give only a few of them into my possession.

You are a good fellow none-the-less; one can be your friend without agreeing with you and this little book has made it clear to me again how far we differ . . .

* Who had replied with an essay to Mendelssohn's criticism of his Spinoza Study.

† Jacobi's summer house.

Farewell. Don't take it amiss that I have written everything down just as I felt it; but I am quite alone here, and would write a good deal more if it didn't mean starting a new page. Farewell.

182 To Frau VON STEIN

Carlsbad,
1st September 1786.

Farewell now from Carlsbad; Fräulein Waldner is bringing this. I'll say nothing about all she can tell you, I simply repeat that I love you dearly, that our last drive to Schneeberg made me very happy and that only your assurance of the joy my love again gives you has been able to bring joy into my life. I have borne many things in silence in the past and my dearest wish has been that our relationship might be so restored that no power can touch it. I would not live near you on any other terms. I would then rather stay on lonely in the foreign lands to which I am now going . . .

It has been a great deal of trouble tidying-up the first four volumes of my works properly and in fact I am taking 'Iphigenie' away with me. Herder was a faithful helper and we decided together on the end of 'Werther' too. He thought it over for some days and we fixed on the newer version. I hope you will like this alteration and the public will not blame me. Love me truly and happily; my whole soul is yours. You shall hear from me soon. Adieu.

183 To CARL AUGUST

Carlsbad,
2nd September 1786.

Forgive me for being rather vague about my travels and absence when I took leave of you; even now I do not know what will happen to me.

You are happy, you are moving towards an aim you wished and chose for yourself. Your domestic affairs are in good order and in a good way, and I know you will permit me now to think of myself. In fact, you have often urged me to do so. I am certainly not indispensable at this moment; and as for the special affairs entrusted to me, I have left them so that they can run on for a while quite comfortably without me. Indeed, I might even die without there being any great shock. I say nothing of how favourable these circumstances are at present and simply ask you to grant me in-

definite leave of absence. The baths these two years have done a great deal for my health and I hope the greatest good for the elasticity of my mind, too, if it can be left to itself for a while to enjoy seeing the wide world.

My first four volumes are complete at last. Herder has been a tireless and faithful helper; now I need to be at leisure and in the mood for the last four. I have undertaken it all rather lightly, and I am only now beginning to see what is to be done if it is not to become a mess. All this and much else impels me to lose myself in places where I am totally unknown. I am going to travel quite alone, under another name, and I have great hopes of this venture, odd as it seems. But please don't let anyone notice that I shall be away for some time. Everyone working with or under me, everyone that has to do with me, expects me from one week to the next, and I want to leave it like that and, although absent, to be as effective as someone expected at any moment.

Here is Riedel's letter . . .

Imhof's year too will soon be up . . . I can't think of anything else I meant to remind you of.

Be happy, I wish that most earnestly, and don't forget me; believe me, I want to make my own existence more complete simply to be able to enjoy it more fully with you and in your circle.

I wish you success in all you do, and may you enjoy the results. If I let my pen run on it would say much more but just a farewell now. Please convey my sincere respects to the Duchess.

One more thing. As usual I have asked Privy-Councillor Schmidt to attend in my absence to matters concerning the War-commission. . . .

1786-1789

O wie fühl' ich in Rom mich so froh gedenk ich der Zeiten,
 Da mich ein graulicher Tag hinten im Norden umfing,
 Trübe der Himmel und schwer auf meine Scheitel sich senkte,
 Farb- und Gestaltlos die Welt um den Ermatteten lag,
 Und ich über mein Ich, des unbefriedigten Geistes
 Düstre Wege zu spähn, still in Betrachtung versank.
 Nun umleuchtet der Glanz des helleren Aethers die Stirne;
 Phoebus ruft, der Gott, Formen und Farben hervor.
 Sternhell glänzet die Nacht, sie klingt von weichen Gesängen,
 Und mir leuchtet der Mond heller als nordischer Tag.

Römische Elegien, VII

Ah, how happy I feel in Rome, when I think of the
 times when a drab day surrounded me back there in the
 North, when the sky weighed, dull and heavy, on my
 head, while the world lay colourless and formless round
 me in my weariness, and I sank silent into contemplation
 of my own self and of the dark paths of the unsatisfied
 spirit. Now the glory of the clearer ether shines about
 my brow; Phoebus, the god, calls forth shapes and colours.
 The night is bright with stars, it rings with gentle melodies
 and the moon shines brighter to my eyes, than daylight
 in the North.

Roman Elegies, VII

THE journey to Italy fulfilled all Goethe's hopes. After a short stay in Venice he went to Rome and remained there for almost eighteen months, making only one journey from there to Naples and Sicily. In Rome he shared rooms with J. H. W. Tischbein in whom he had been interested before he met him there (see letter to Lavater, 4th October 1782). Tischbein painted a romantic portrait of Goethe among the ruins of Rome and made a charming sketch of him; these two works now constitute one of his chief claims to fame. He introduced Goethe to a circle of German artists, musicians and writers: Kobell, a painter from Munich; Krantz, a young musician who was studying in Rome with the financial help of Carl August; Angelika Kaufmann, the artist, who later moved to London and became a prominent member of the circle of Swiss-German artists there; and C. P. Moritz, a young novelist and writer on aesthetics, known to his contemporaries mainly through his novel *Anton Reiser, ein psychologischer Roman*.

The relief from official duties—though Goethe kept up a correspondence about some of them and about political matters—and the new experience that Italy offered him provided the stimulus that Goethe's poetic genius had needed. He was now able to add the finishing touches to the versification of his play *Iphigenie in Tauris*, at which he had been working before he went South; he re-wrote in verse *Torquato Tasso*, a play first written in prose; he finished the tragedy *Egmont* and added some more scenes to *Faust*. Goethe's botanical and osteological studies also benefited from his travels; he never ceased to be interested in them however enthusiastic he now became about the treasures of ancient and renaissance art, which he saw in Italy.

Goethe arrived back in Weimar in June 1788 after an absence of almost two years. Thirty years later he described how unhappy he felt during the first years after his return: 'I had come back from Italy, so rich in forms, to shapeless Germany; I had to exchange a bright sky for a dull one. Instead of consoling me and again drawing me closer to themselves, my friends reduced me to despair. My delight over what lay so distant and which was known to so few, my sufferings, my sorrow at what I had lost, all seemed an offence to them. I met with no sympathy at all; no-one really understood what I said.' In addition to this some of Goethe's oldest friends were not themselves happy: Merck was in financial straits which, despite help from Goethe and the Duke, in June 1791 drove him to suicide; Friedrich Stolberg had just lost his wife. Carl August was busy with political plans and military exercises which took him frequently away from Weimar; Herder was in the suite of the Dowager-Duchess in Italy; a misunderstanding arose with Knebel, due

to the latter having drawn a comparison between the frost patterns on window panes and actual plants, which led Goethe to write an article deploring this sort of unscientific approach.

The beginning too of Goethe's acquaintance with Schiller, which began at this time, was not a very happy one. Friedrich Schiller, ten years younger than Goethe, had published several tragedies, all characteristic products of the Storm and Stress epoch. The first one, *Die Räuber*, with its motto '*In tyrannos*' was perhaps the most revolutionary play of the time and earned for Schiller in 1792 the Civic Diploma of the French National Convention. His revolutionary tendency as well as the exaggerated Storm and Stress form of his plays were too extreme ever to have pleased Goethe. In any case they came too late, as in 1781 when the *Räuber* was published, Goethe's Storm and Stress epoch had already ended and he had little enthusiasm left even for his own writings of that period. When Schiller first arrived in Weimar he became slightly envious of the love and admiration with which everyone there spoke of the absent Goethe, though he had himself always had the highest opinion of his work. They met soon after Goethe's return from Italy and Schiller felt hurt by Goethe's somewhat cool attitude; he now both admired and hated him, a feeling, as he wrote to a friend, similar to that which Brutus and Cassius might have entertained towards Caesar before they murdered him. Goethe on his side was probably quite unaware of this; he knew that Schiller was anxious to get married and required for this some recognised social position and, as at that time a post in the History Department of Jena University became vacant, he suggested that it be offered to Schiller who had just published a literary-historical work *Die Geschichte des Abfalls der Niederlande*. Schiller after some hesitation accepted the appointment. But the relations between the two men remained cool.

The greatest disappointment which Goethe experienced at this time, however, came from Frau von Stein. She could not forgive him having been so happy away from her and she also refused to take any interest in what he tried to tell her about his Italian journey or in any of his new ideas. Lonely and unhappy as this made him feel, he sought comfort in the love of Christiane Vulpius. When Frau von Stein heard of this she bitterly reproached him and then made a final break. Christiane Vulpius was a simple young girl whom Goethe had met by chance and taken into his house as his housekeeper. She did not belong to Weimar 'Society' and had earned her living by making artificial flowers; her brother, who later became the author of a very popular novel called *Rinaldo Rinaldini* was applying for a post, and had asked his sister to hand in his application to the state-minister von Goethe; seventeen years later Goethe and Christiane were married.

At 3 o'clock on the morning of the 3rd September I slipped out of Carlsbad; I couldn't have got away otherwise. People noticed of course that I was anxious to go away; Countess Lanthieri made a dreadful fuss about it. But I let nothing stand in my way, for the time had come. I meant to leave sooner, on the 28th. But that wasn't possible because there was still a great deal to settle.

At 7.30 a beautiful, still, misty morning in Zwota.

At noon in hot sunshine in Eger. The morning had been overcast, the upper clouds were streaky and woolly, the lower ones heavy; the weather kept fair with a wind from the south-west. Reflections on this. Already on the 2nd the weather had looked promising. For fuller details see Note (a), fol. 20 [of the diary I am keeping for you].

I found that Eger is on the same latitude as Frankfort and I was glad to be taking my mid-day meal once more near the 50° line. From Carlsbad to Zwota quartz-like sandstone; the road to Maria-Culm runs along a diluvial ridge. As far as Eger level tracts and farmland.

In Bavaria the monastery of Waldsassen at once strikes one's notice, a charming property belonging to those who had grown wise before the rest. It lies in a fertile hollow, shaped like a plate rather than a basin, in a beautiful stretch of meadowland, surrounded by rich, gently sloping ground, and the monastery owns many estates in the district. The soil is loose clay-slate, which the quartz in it renders porous. Waldsassen, though still on high ground, is pleasantly situated, the fields giving a good yield.

Till near Tischengreut the land rises, the streams flow towards you, to the Eger and the Elbe. Beyond Tischengreut the land slopes southwards, and the streams all run towards the Danube.

Tischengreut at 5 o'clock. Magnificent high road of granitic sand; impossible to imagine a better one. The country through which it runs is all the worse by contrast, granitic sand likewise, flat, boggy, etc. With the good road and the country sloping gradually away, one covers this stretch at an incredible speed that contrasts sharply with the snail's pace through Bohemia. At half past eight I was in Weida, at one o'clock at night in Wernberg, at

* This letter as well as the letters Nos. 185, 186, 187, 188, 189 and 190 are taken from 'Goethes Briefe an Frau von Stein.' ed. by H. Heinemann. Cotta, Stuttgart.

half past two Schwarzenfeld, half past four Schwandorf, half past seven Bahnholz, ten o'clock Regensburg; I had covered these twelve stages or fifty miles in 31 hours.*

It grew light between Schwandorf and Regenstauff, and I noticed a change for the better in the soil. In very early times the Danube's ebb and flow was felt up the river Regen and formed these natural *polders*,† which we now turn to account. This sort of thing is noticeable in the neighbourhood of any great river. I think I've spoken of it to you before. Regensburg has a beautiful situation, and that was bound to attract a town. And the Lords Spiritual have laid their hand on things well; all the farmland round about the town belongs to them, and, in the town, church crowds on church and monastery on monastery.

The Danube reminds me of my old friend the Main. At Frankfurt river and bridge are seen to better advantage, but here Stadt-am-Hof across the river makes a most charming picture.

The Jesuit scholars gave their annual performance to-day. I went there at once; saw the beginning of the tragedy and the end of the opera. They were no worse than any troupe of amateur-beginners. The costumes were very fine, almost too sumptuous. This and the whole thing, which I shall some day describe to you, convinced me anew of the consummate cleverness of the Jesuits. It is not cleverness as one thinks of it *in abstracto*; it is joy in the thing itself too, in the giving and receiving of pleasure that life brings with it. How pleased I am to be entering the orbit of Catholicism and learning to know the whole of it.

If only you were with me, I would be talkative all day long, for the rapid variety of objects leads to hundreds of observations. I often wish Fritz were here, but I am alone and remain so.

It's impossible to tell you how happy my way of looking at things makes me; I learn so much each day! Hardly any form of life is a riddle to me; everything speaks to me and begins to reveal itself. And as I have no servant with me, I am friends with all the world. Every beggar shows me the way and I talk with the people I meet as if we had known each other for a long time. It is a real delight to me.

I am writing to you to-day from exactly 49° latitude, a kindly one, for the morning was cool. The people here complain of the damp and cold; but it was a glorious, mild day and the air near a great river is something quite different from elsewhere.

* English miles.

† Polders: name used in Holland for land reclaimed with dykes from the sea.

The fruit here is not particularly good, but I live in hopes of continued improvement. I bought some pears for one Kreuzer from an old woman whom I met at the water, and ate them '*publice*' like a schoolboy. Now I am hoping for grapes and figs soon. I mean to enclose a rough sketch of Regensburg and the Jesuits' performance.

N.B. The Jesuits' churches, towers, all their ornament! Something imposing in the design that insensibly inspires all men with awe. Gold, silver, metal and pomp, richness to dazzle the beggars in whatever walk of life, and here and there a tasteless touch to reconcile and attract the masses. This is the real genius of the Catholics' spectacular service of God, but I have so far never seen it executed with so much understanding, skill and taste, and so much consistency as by the Jesuits, and all their churches are alike in this. More of this later. One sees how instead of carrying on with the old dull devotion of the priests of other orders they have progressed with the *Genio Saeculi*.

Regensburg,
5th September 1786.

I had brought only a portmanteau and a hide valise with me from Carlsbad; for my clothes this was excessive, but as I have so many books and papers, it was too awkward. Now I have bought a small trunk, which is just what I want. It is a good thing too, that I am alone, for constant service is bound to make one old and helpless before one's time. I enjoy it all more like this and seem to begin everything at the beginning again.

I certainly hope to part on this journey with a few cardinal faults which cling to me.

Sketch made on the bank of the Danube. No. 2.

Half past eleven.

It's high time I was away from here! An assistant in the bookshop recognised me; he used to serve in Hofmann's. You see no good can possibly come to authors from booksellers. However, I looked him straight in the face with the greatest composure and denied I was myself.

I have seen Pastor Schäfer and his collection; I called myself Möller on that occasion and I mean to keep that name. Farewell now; I am starting for Munich . . .

Venice,
28th September 1786.

It was written, then, on my page in the book of fate that on the afternoon of the 28th September, at 5 o'clock our time, I should leave the Brenta, enter the Lagoons and gain my first sight of Venice; and furthermore that soon after I should enter and visit this wonderful island-city, this beaver-republic. So now, thank God, this word 'Venice' has ceased to be just a word for me, a name at which in my bitter hatred of mere words I have so often shrunk.

As the first gondola drew near our boat, I recalled my first toy; I hadn't thought of it for the last twenty years, I suppose. My father brought it back from Venice, a beautiful model gondola; he set great store by it and it was considered a great treat for me to be allowed to play with it. These first iron-plated prows, the black gondola-cabins, I greeted everything like an old acquaintance, as a long-lost childhood's impression.

And as I seem to go on my travels only to tell you about them, now it is dark I am settling down to say to you a heap of things.

I have comfortable quarters in the 'Queen of England', not far from St. Mark's Square; that is their chief advantage. My windows look on to a narrow canal between high houses; immediately below me is a bridge and opposite there is a narrow busy passage. That's where I live; I shall stay here for a while until my parcel for Germany is ready and until I have finished feasting my eyes on this city.

I have often sighed for solitude and if there is any pleasure in it, I am in a good position to enjoy it now, for one feels nowhere so alone as in a throng like this where one is completely unknown. It may well be that there is hardly one person in Venice who knows me, and I am not likely to meet him. We had magnificent weather for the journey here on the Brenta; Volkmann describes it well on page 636. I travelled by the public boat and cannot say enough in praise of the decorum and propriety of such a mixed company of middle-class people. There were some very pretty, modestly-behaved women and girls among them. I find it amazingly easy to live among these people. As we drew near Venice another passenger and I hired a gondola and so we entered the city. It is a grand, imposing sight.

I hurried to St. Mark's Square and now that picture too has enriched and widened my mind. I'll say no more to-night. I shall

find time here to let you know my thoughts. Farewell. You whom I love ever as dearly and tenderly.

29th morning.

Yesterday evening the whole sky grew overcast and I feared we might have rain, the water-birds, too, seemed to be giving warning of it. To-day the weather is magnificent again. My work at 'Iphigenie' is finished for to-day and now I am dressing to go out. But first here's a greeting and a Good-morning.

Michaelmas-Day, evening.

It is always inexpressibly sweet to sit down to write to you after a happy, well-spent day. As night was falling I reluctantly left St. Mark's Square; only the fear of being too much delayed drove me home.

Everything that can be said about Venice has been said and printed already, so just a few points now as they strike me. Here too the chief idea that is borne in upon me is always that of the people. A vast crowd, an inevitable instinctive existence. This race has not fled to these islands for the fun of it, it was no whim that drove others to unite with them; it was luck that made their position so favourable, it was luck that gave them wisdom at a time when the whole of the northern world was a prey to folly; the expansion of their numbers, like their wealth, followed inevitably. Then the congestion grew more and more acute, sand and swamp changed to rock under their feet, their houses reached up into the air; like closely planted trees they were forced to try to gain in height what was denied to them in space. Avid for every span of earth, and cramped from the start into small spaces, they left at certain places no more than just enough room to separate one house from the next and to let people pass by. Besides the water stood in the place of street, square and walk for them. In short the Venetians had to develop into a new kind of creature, and that is why Venice can be compared only to itself. Just as the Grand Canal surely cannot be compared to any street in the world, so there can be nothing to set beside the space by St. Mark's Square. I mean that great expanse of water which on one side is enclosed in a half circle by Venice itself; opposite lies the island of St. Giorgio, somewhat further to the right the Giudecca and its canal, to the right again the Dogana and the entrance to the Grand Canal. To make my meaning clearer, I will

draw lines on the enclosed map of Venice to show the chief landmarks that strike the eye as one leaves St. Mark's Square by the two columns. (N.B. I haven't done this, as it does not give a clear picture).

I have gazed at all this with a calm and tranquil eye, and taken pleasure in this great achievement of man. To proceed by stages, I went out for the first time on foot and alone, and simply noting the points of the compass, I plunged into the labyrinth of the city. It is quite incredible unless one has seen it. Usually one can measure or almost measure, the width of the streets with one's arms, and in the passages one couldn't even stretch one's arms out. There are wider streets, but all are proportionately narrow. I easily found the Canal Grande and the Ponte Rialto. It is a noble, beautiful sight, especially as one sees it from this high-arched bridge. The Canal is dotted with boats and crowded with gondolas, particularly to-day as on the Feast of St. Michael the women dressed in their best, were on their way to church and were being ferried at least across the Canal. I met some very beautiful creatures.

When I was tired I got into a gondola and leaving the narrow passages passed along the Grand Canal, round the Island of Santa Chiara, along the Great Lagoon into the Canal della Giudecca as far as St. Mark's Square. There I suddenly felt myself, like every Venetian reclining in his gondola, a joint lord of the Adriatic. I called to mind my poor father, who knew no greater pleasure than to tell of these things. Venice is a great imposing work of united human energy, a magnificent monument not of *one commander*, but of a *people*. And though their lagoons are gradually silting up and stinking and their trade grows less and their might declines, that does not make the whole plan of the Republic and its character for one instant less venerable in my eyes. It is, like everything that exists, subject to time.

We shall have many and many a talk about it and also about something one ought not to discuss here: the State and its secrets, which I think I know quite well without any traitor's aid.

Now a few remarks apropos of Volkmann, Part 3.

p. 509. You must see a print of St. Mark's; the architecture is on a par with every piece of folly that may ever have been taught or enacted in it. (I usually amuse myself by thinking of the *façade* as a colossal crab. At least I imagine I could form some vast shell-fish of these proportions).

p. 513. Old [Graeco-Roman] horses. These precious creatures

stand here like sheep that have lost their shepherd. When they stood close together, on a more worthy building, before the triumphal car of a world-ruler, they may have been a noble sight. But thank God, Christian zeal has not melted them down and made candlesticks or crucifixes out of them. Let them stand here in honour of St. Mark, as we owe them to him.

p. 515. The Doge's Palace, particularly the façade on St. Mark's Square. The most curious thing that I think the human mind has created. More of this when I see you. I have an idea which I just mention as an idea. It is that the first artists in the field of architecture appear to have imitated the ruins of Antiquity as they stood still half buried; it is only their successors who have removed the rubble and disclosed their beautiful shape.

When you see columns like these, don't you think part of them is still sunk in the ground; and yet the lower colonnade of the Doge's Palace is only that height.



p. 528. The Columns on the Piazzetta. Both are of granite; one perhaps ten times as tall as its diameter, is of red granite which has kept its polish and colour beautifully. It is so slender and graceful, one can never gaze one's fill at it.

The other, its height about eight times its diameter, may belong to the Doric order as the first one belongs to the 'composite' order; it is of white granite which has suffered through time and has acquired a kind of incrustation as thick as the back of a stout knife; this has become dull on the outside and is now flaking off in places. On the Piazzetta side of St. Mark's Church there are two smaller columns of this kind and the same thing is noticeable.

I have not been into any building except St. Mark's. There is enough to do outside, and the people never cease to interest me. I have spent a long time this morning in the Fishmarket, watching them haggling and buying with unbelievable greed, vigilance and astuteness.

The public administration and the life of their courts of law is also amusing. There sit the notaries, etc., each writing at his desk. Somebody goes to him to ask him to have drawn up a document, etc.; others walk about, etc. The people spend their whole lives together, and of course the beggars have their place in these scenes. Otherwise we should never have had the Odyssey or the parable of the Rich Man. I'm scribbling dreadfully again; but I never can wait for the word to be on paper.

Venice,
5th October 1786,
after dinner.

I was in the Arsenal this morning and it was very interesting too, since I have no knowledge of things to do with the sea, and so have been as it were here in the junior classes. The whole thing, to be sure, makes one think of some old family that is still active but with whom both blossom- and fruit-time are past.

By watching the workmen I also saw a number of interesting things. I was on a ship of 84 cannon whose framework stands finished there.

Another of the same kind which was quite finished and fitted out, lying off the *Riva dei Schiavoni*, was burnt down to the water-line six months ago. The powder magazine was not very full and when it exploded there was not much harm done. The nearby houses lost their window-panes.

I have been watching men working with fine Istrian oakwood. My knowledge of the things of nature that man needs as raw-materials for his own use, may be hard won; but I cannot repeat often enough what a help it is and how it makes things clear to me. My knowledge of minerals and fossils, for instance, helps me greatly with architecture.

During this journey I hope to set my mind at rest about the fine arts, to impress their sacred image firmly upon my mind as a source of tranquil enjoyment. Then I hope to turn my attention to the craftsmen, and on my return study chemistry and mechanics. For the age of the beautiful is over; our own times demand only necessity and strict usefulness.

I have already first thoughts and feelings on the revival of the arts in Italy during the Middle Ages, on this *Astrea*, who also soon left the earth again, and on how this hangs together. How vividly Roman history rises before me! Alas, alas, my dear; it's all a little late. If only I had had a clever Englishman for my father and so had not been obliged, as I still am, to acquire and conquer it all alone, quite alone.

It is raining and I am sitting by the fire. When shall I next be offering you tea at my own fireside?

When I promised you coffee from Alexandria you probably didn't think I was going to fetch it myself from Venice. I have asked in various places already and have had enquiries made by experts, but I am not quite confident yet; I must be absolutely certain. The

kind I saw costs a ducat for seven ounces and that would not be much. Of course the transport to Thuringia in the centre of Europe comes into it too; well, you shall have some.

I did not go to the comedy yesterday, as I had meant to do. I hope to see a tragedy to-day and am most curious to do so.

I get on better every day with regard to architecture. Once in the water one learns to swim. I have got to understand the arrangement of the pillars and I can usually see the reason. Now I also find I remember the dimensions and proportions; when they were pure memory-work I never could understand or retain them.

A word about the *Bucentaur*. It is a show-galley. But an excellent idea too and well carried out. I keep coming back to what I have often said before: if an artist has a genuine subject, he can create something genuine. In this case the task was to build a galley worthy to bear the heads of a republic on their most solemn festival to the sacrament of their ancient traditional government. And it is well carried out. All ornament! One therefore cannot say overladen with ornament. All carving and gilding, not for any purpose, a veritable *Monstrance* to show the people its rulers in all their magnificence. And we know that the people, while liking to adorn their own hats, also like to see their superiors magnificently decked out. It is a real family piece and shows what the Venetians were and thought themselves to be.

I am writing all this to you, so there will not be much left to tell you. It is true for me to say that I have never had a thought I considered of any value but I have told you about it, at least shortly. It is not yet time for the theatre, so here a word or two about Palladio that fits with what I wrote yesterday. I have seen much to criticise side by side with what is truly sublime, in his finished works, particularly in the churches, and I felt as if he were standing beside me, saying: I did this and this unwillingly, but I did it because it was the only way in the given circumstances of getting nearest to my highest ideal. I feel that when he looked at an open space, some height and width, an already existing church, an old house for which he was to erect a façade, his only consideration must have been: how will you achieve the noblest form for this as a whole, for you must scamp this and that, here and there incongruities will arise, but that cannot be helped; the whole will be in a lofty style and you will take pleasure in your work. So it comes about that from time to time he has brought the noble image that was in his mind into being where it was not completely in place, where he had to dis-

member and maim it. That is why I am so fond of the wing of the *Carita*, for there he entirely followed his own inspiration. If he had finished it, there would probably be no more perfect piece of architecture in the world to-day.

This (how he thought and how he worked, I mean) grows clearer to me the more I read his works or rather see how he treated the ancients. He has few words to say, but they are all of importance. It is the fourth book, on Classical Temples, that forms the right introduction for seeing Rome intelligently.

It is most remarkable how other architects before and after him have chewed over these difficulties and how they have got out of them along the lines of the golden mean of mediocrity.

I shall grasp all this better once I have graduated from the junior classes.

In the night.

I am coming laughing back to my room after the tragedy, and I'll tell you about it before I go to bed. It wasn't a bad play. The author had drawn in every tragic matador and it was easy for the actors to play. Most of the situations were familiar, but a few were more novel and quite well conceived. In the end there was nothing for it but that the two fathers should stab one another and this went off successfully. Whereupon the curtain fell, amid great applause. But then the clapping grew in volume, there were shouts of *fuora*, and at last the two principal couples condescended to creep round from behind the curtain, make their bows, and go off on the other side. But the audience was not satisfied yet, went on clapping and shouted: *i morti!* This went on until the two old men also came forward and made their bows, at which some voices cried *bravi i morti!* They were heartily applauded and went off. The whole farce loses much unless one's ears ring, like mine, with the *bravo! bravi!* that the Italians are always shouting, and hears them then suddenly addressing even the dead with this honourable greeting. I laughed heartily to myself. Good-night. *Felicissima notte!* as the Italians say.

187 To Frau VON STEIN

*Venice,
7th October 1786.*

... This evening I had arranged to hear the famous song of the boatmen who sing the words of Tasso and Ariosto to their tunes. I

got into a gondola by moonlight and the singers began, one in the prow and the other in the stern singing the verses in turn. The tune we know from Rousseau is something between a chorale and a recitative. Its shaping is always the same without any definite rhythm or modulation, but they change both tone and time with a kind of declamation according to the sense of the verse.

But here's the real spirit and life of their song!

I will not examine how the tune has evolved; enough to say that it suits to perfection a leisurely fellow who amuses himself with his own singing and weds poems he knows to this tune.

He sits in a boat by the bank of an canal-island and with a penetrating voice (the ordinary people rate volume above everything) he lets his song ring out as far as he can. Over that calm expanse of water it carries far. In the distance another singer hears it; he knows the tune, understands the words and answers with the next verse. The first man answers again, and so one continually echoes the other and the song goes on for whole nights, entertaining without exhausting the singers. The farther they are from each other, the more delightful is the song, and between the two is the best spot for the listener.

To let me hear this they landed at the Bank of the Giudecca, went their separate ways along the canal, and I walked up and down between them, always away from the one whose turn it was to sing and towards the one who was stopping. Only then did the real meaning of this singing become clear to me. And heard like that, a voice from far away, it sounds strange, like a lament without the sorrow in it—unbelievably moving, even to tears. I put this down to my mood, but my servant said on the way back: *'è singolare come quel canto intenerisce, e molto più quando è più ben cantato'*. He told me one must hear the women on the Lido sing, especially those from the outlying parts, Malamocco and Palestrina. He said they sang the words of Tasso to this tune and others like it. They sit down on the shore in the evenings when their husbands are at sea fishing, and sing these songs at the top of their voices until they hear their husbands' voices answering in the distance. It is like friendly conversation for them. Don't you think that's beautiful, really beautiful! Obviously nobody listening nearby would take much pleasure in these voices struggling to drown the sound of the waves of the sea. But how human and how true it makes the idea of this song! This tune over whose dead notes we have so often puzzled in vain, now seems so alive to me, this song that one solitary

man sends out into the distance for another who feels as he does, to hear and answer him.

Why can I not send you even one tone for you to hear at that same hour and you to answer me?

Good-night, my love. I am tired with all the walking to and fro and over bridges. Good-night.

188 To Frau VON STEIN

*Bologna,
19th October 1786,
evening.*

I should like to write to you something calm and sensible once more, these last days I could not manage it. I don't know how it will be this evening. The world is running away under my feet and a passion beyond words is driving me on. The sight of the Raphael and a walk towards the hills this evening have calmed me somewhat and have almost imperceptibly woven a bond between me and this town. I tell you just how I feel; I am not ashamed to own any weakness to you.

First of all Raphael's St. Cecilia. It is just as I knew it to be and now I have actually seen it. He has simply done what others have wished to do. To understand him, to form a right opinion of him and yet not to think of him as a god, as one after the order of Melchisedek, without father, without mother—to do this, one must look at his predecessors, his master. These gained a footing upon the solid ground of truth; eagerly, painstakingly they laid the broad foundations, they vied with one another in raising the pyramid step by step until finally Raphael, aided by all these advantages and in the light of his divine genius, added the apex to it, the last stone, above which, beside which, no other can stand. About the picture we can talk later, there's nothing to say but that he painted it. Five saints in a row, none of whom concerns us, but whose being is so perfect that, though one is quite content at the prospect of one's own dissolution, one wishes this picture would last for ever.

I look at the older masters with a particular interest, and also at Raphael's early works. Francesco da Francia is a fine artist. Of Pietro Perugino one feels like saying: an honest German soul.

If Fortune had only led Albrecht Dürer to cross the Alps! * I saw

* This is an error; Dürer was twice in Northern Italy. Goethe realised this later and amended the passage when in 1816 he used this letter among others for his *Italiänische Reise*: 'If Fortune had only led Albrecht Dürer further South in Italy'.

some of his unbelievably fine works in Munich. Poor man! To have gone to the Netherlands instead, where he bought his parrot, etc. I find this kind of poor fool of an artist infinitely moving, for it is essentially my fate too, only that I know a shade better how to shift for myself.

189 To Frau VON STEIN

*Perugia,
25th October 1786,
evening.*

. . . The town of [Florence] bears witness to the wealth that built it and to the succession of fortunate governments. Altogether it is striking how, as soon as you come into Tuscany, the public works, both roads and bridges, have such a beautiful grand air; it is all as neat as a doll's house.

Tuscany is what I recently said the Apennines might be. Because it lies so much lower the old sea has done its work and piled up a thick layer of lime soil, light yellow and very easy to work; they plough a deep furrow, but still quite in the traditional way. Their plough has no wheels and the ploughshare is not movable, so the peasant drags himself along in a crouching position behind his oxen and turns the soil roughly over. They plough up to five times. I have seen little manure and even that of a very light sort; true children of nature, they spread it by hand. More about their primitive character later on. Finally they sow the wheat and then heap up narrow ridges with deep furrows between them, all so planned that the rain-water will run off. The corn then grows on the ridges and they walk along the furrows to weed. I don't yet understand why they leave so much space unused. They do so seemingly at some places where they have cause to fear dampness, but they do it on the finest stretches too. I have no proper knowledge of the matter as yet.

Near Arezzo a truly magnificent expanse opens out. I looked over this farmland and noted the methods of cultivation.

You couldn't see cleaner land anywhere; not a clod of earth, everything clear. But there's no sign either of stubble ploughed under and yet the wheat has a really fine natural growth.

The second year they sow beans for the horses, which are not fed on oats here. Lupins too are sown and these are a beautiful green just now and will seed in March. Flax has already been sown and is

coming up; it lasts through the winter and the frost only makes it sturdier, though it would not stand our winters. Olives are strange trees. When old, they almost look like willows, and they lose their sap too and the bark splits. It has, however, a firmer, tougher look. You can tell by its wood that its growth is slow and it is extremely fine-grained. The leaf too is like a willow leaf, but there are fewer leaves on the stalk. On the hills round Florence the whole countryside is planted with olives and vines, with corn in between. Near Arezzo and further on there are more open fields. I do not think they do enough to check the ivy, which feeds on the olives as on other trees. It would surely be an easy matter. There's not a meadow to be seen. They say the maize has exhausted the soil. I well believe it with the little manure they use. I take all this in in passing, and I am really enjoying the beauty of the country, though the inconveniences are great. I am careful to take note not only of the countryside itself, but also of its inhabitants, agriculture and the relations of the people to one another. Finally I observe myself, a foreigner, what happens to me and how it affects me . . .

I am just writing on and on; it's cold and some merchants from Foligno are dining at the fire in the other room; I go and warm myself there from time to time . . .

190 To Frau VON STEIN

*Rome,
29th October 1786,
evening.*

My second word shall be to you; I have thanked Heaven with all my heart for bringing me here.

I can say nothing but just: I am here; I have sent for Tischbein.

191 To CARL AUGUST

*Rome,
3rd November 1786.*

At last I can open my mouth and greet you happily. Forgive my secrecy and the more or less subterranean journey here. I hardly dared tell even myself where I was going, and still on the way I had fears and could only be sure of Rome when I was entering it by the Porta del Popolo.

And now let me also tell you that I think of you a thousand times, indeed constantly, while I enjoy the sights I never thought I should

see without you. I saw you chained body and soul to the north with no further wish of seeing these parts; it was only then that I could resign myself to making a long lone journey to find the objects to which I felt so irresistibly drawn. These last years it has been a kind of sickness, only to be cured by sight and presence. Now I can confess that latterly I haven't been able to look at a Latin author or an Italian landscape. The longing to see this country was more than ripe. Now this is satisfied, I begin to feel again a deep love of my friends and my native land and the wish to return to them. Later it may be possible to see all this in your company too and to be useful to you here and indeed at home too through the knowledge I am gaining. If so, I shall have nothing left to wish for.

How long I stay here now will depend on what you say and on the news from home. If I can be spared for a while, let me finish well what has been well begun and seems to have the blessing of Heaven.

But please give me news as soon as possible of yourself, your family, what is happening, and how things are in the North . . .

192 To Frau CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE

Rome,
4th November 1786.

First I must tell you, my dear Mother, that I have reached here happy and well. I very much enjoyed the journey which I made quite secretly. I came through Bavaria and the Tyrol, and by Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, and Florence. I travelled quite alone and unknown and I am keeping up a kind of incognito here, too.

I can't tell you how happy it makes me to find so many of my life's dreams and wishes unravelled, to see in reality things that I have seen from childhood in prints, things Father so often talked about.

I admit I am rather late in seeing it all, but it's all the more useful to me; I see it in quick succession, and a great deal in a short time.

I don't know yet how long I shall stay; it will depend on how things go on at home. In any case I'll return through Switzerland and come to you. And we shall have a grand time together; but we'll keep that a secret between us two.

I haven't time to say much to-day, I just wanted you to share my joy at once. I shall come back a new person and live to be more of a pleasure to myself and to my friends.

Send the enclosed note to the Bethmänner [the bankers], without saying it comes through you. They have been advancing sums to me, though without knowing it, under another name.

Write soon all about how things are with you, and any other news; abroad, any news of friends and dear ones is of interest. Tell me too when this letter reaches you, to give me an idea. Farewell and love me.

193 To FRIENDS IN WEIMAR

*Rome,
7th November 1786.*

I have been here ten days now and the general idea of this city emerges gradually before me. We walk about, observing everything, I get acquainted with the plan of Rome, old and new, look at the ruins, the buildings, visit one or the other villa. After that we take the principal sights quite slowly. I just open my eyes and look and go away and come back again. We don't forget to observe the people and so we cover the ground step by step. Decidedly Rome is the only place where one can prepare one's mind for Rome.

The most interesting thing I have met with on this journey from the human point of view is the Republic of Venice, not as I saw it with my eyes so much as with my mind. The greatest work—intrinsically the greatest—is [Palladio's] Rotonda [at Vicenza], the greatest in actual measurements the Church of St. Peter (than which there is surely no greater building in the world), and the greatest as evidence of genius, seeming indeed almost unbelievable, is the Apollo Belvedere. For though I have frequently seen casts and possess a good bust from it, yet one feels one has never seen the statue before. Not to mention everything else that is good and wonderful . . .

194 To KNEBEL

*Rome,
17th November 1786.*

A special greeting to you too, my dear Knebel, from Abraham's bosom. How often you are in my thoughts, and how I wish I could tell you all sorts of things.

I feel quite at home here. Tischbein's goodness and care make everything easy for me; he's a very good, clever fellow.

As you know there are few traces left of the daily life of the Ancients. All the more impressive are the remains that show their care for the people, for the general good, and their true greatness as the rulers of the world. I have already seen the most remarkable sights again and again.

Aqueducts, baths, theatres, amphitheatres, the race course, temples! And then the palaces of the Caesars, the graves of the great—I have fed and nourished my mind with these sights. I am reading Vitruvius for the spirit of the age when all this was rising from the ground to breathe upon me. And I have the works of Palladio too, who in his day saw a great deal still more complete, measured it, and with his excellent understanding made drawings of it. Rome, the old Phoenix, rises like a spirit from its grave. Yet for me it all means effort instead of enjoyment, and sadness instead of joy.

Surely, every man has to interpret Rome for himself; it is all just ruins, but no-one who hasn't seen these ruins knows what greatness is. Museums and galleries are after all only charnel-houses and ossuaries for skulls—but what skulls! Churches show us only martyrs and torment; modern palaces are nothing but fragments, stolen and plundered from all over the world. I don't want to say any more. I only mean one can look for everything here except unity, harmony; and that's what misleads many foreigners. I have been here three weeks now, but if you want to do things properly you might stay six months and then only just realise where you are.

This letter is such a patchy affair too; so are all my letters from here—When I come back, my tongue shall give you something more complete.

Though it is so late in the season, I am enjoying my slight botanical knowledge here where everything grows happily and is less affected by the seasons.

I have already made some good general observations; you will be glad to share them later on.

The mineral kingdom has its throne here, where all that is most precious is gathered from the ends of the world. You can imagine how a granite-lover like me must look at the obelisks and columns.

Some time ago I sent a copy of Färber's 'Letter' on the oldest varieties of stone to Tischbein, and he has plunged into the study

of these things with an artist's practical imagination. He has learned much and now he is helping me with my studies.

Vesuvius was in eruption about a fortnight ago, and there was a considerable flow of lava. A brand-new piece a traveller brought back with him is here before me on the table.

I thought of you so often as I followed in your footsteps through the Tyrol. I stayed a few days on the Brenner Pass.

Kobel wasn't in when I called on him in Munich. I drove straight through all the country on the way, and could not rest till I got here, where I am now enjoying everything to my heart's content. I am sending this letter unsealed to Frau von Stein. Farewell. Love me and try to prepare a welcome for me when I come back.

I have collected some good bits of Bolognese gypseous spar on the hills; it is the kind that shines after it is calcinated; but what seems specially remarkable about it is its unusual specific gravity compared with that of other types of gypsum.

195 To CARL AUGUST

Rome,
12th-16th December 1786.

My first letter from here will have reached you in Berlin, so I couldn't expect any answer yet, though I do long to hear from you. I have been wandering about Rome, almost tiring myself out indeed, and I have *seen* nearly everything. But what's the use of just *seeing* objects when one ought to stand before them and keep going back, if one is to learn to know and appreciate them. You will find more about this in a note I am writing to the Duchess.

I have also been completely re-writing 'Iphigenie'; an honest Swiss fellow is making a copy and it will be ready to send about Christmas. I hope that it has been worth while taking this trouble and that it will give you pleasure too. And now I must set to work on other things, on 'Faust' too, at last. When I planned to have things published as fragments, I looked on myself as dead. How happy I shall be once I can prove myself alive again by finishing what I have begun.

By about Christmas I shall have finished for the time being with what I set myself for Rome, and in the new year I shall go to Naples, enjoy nature in her splendour there, wash my soul clear of its idea of so many sad ruins, and temper any over-strict conceptions of art. Tischbein is going with me; he is indispensable to me. I have

scarcely ever met with a man at once so pure, so good and yet so intelligent and cultured. I feel very sorry indeed that he cannot be reckoned as one of yours, not simply as an artist but as a man of good sense and energy; I take on a new life in his company, it is a delight to discuss every subject with him, to look at nature and art and to enjoy them with him.

By the way, my strict incognito comes in very useful. People know me and I talk with everyone whom I meet. But I don't let people address me by my official title or name, and I neither call nor see visitors. If I were not so insistent on this, I would have to spend my time receiving and paying compliments. The only visit I have paid is to Prince Liechtenstein, Countess Harrach's brother; but even then we first met in one of the galleries (the Doria). I mean to stick to this plan, for I am known here more widely than I expected and my fellow-countrymen think more of me than I had imagined . . .

196 To Frau VON STEIN

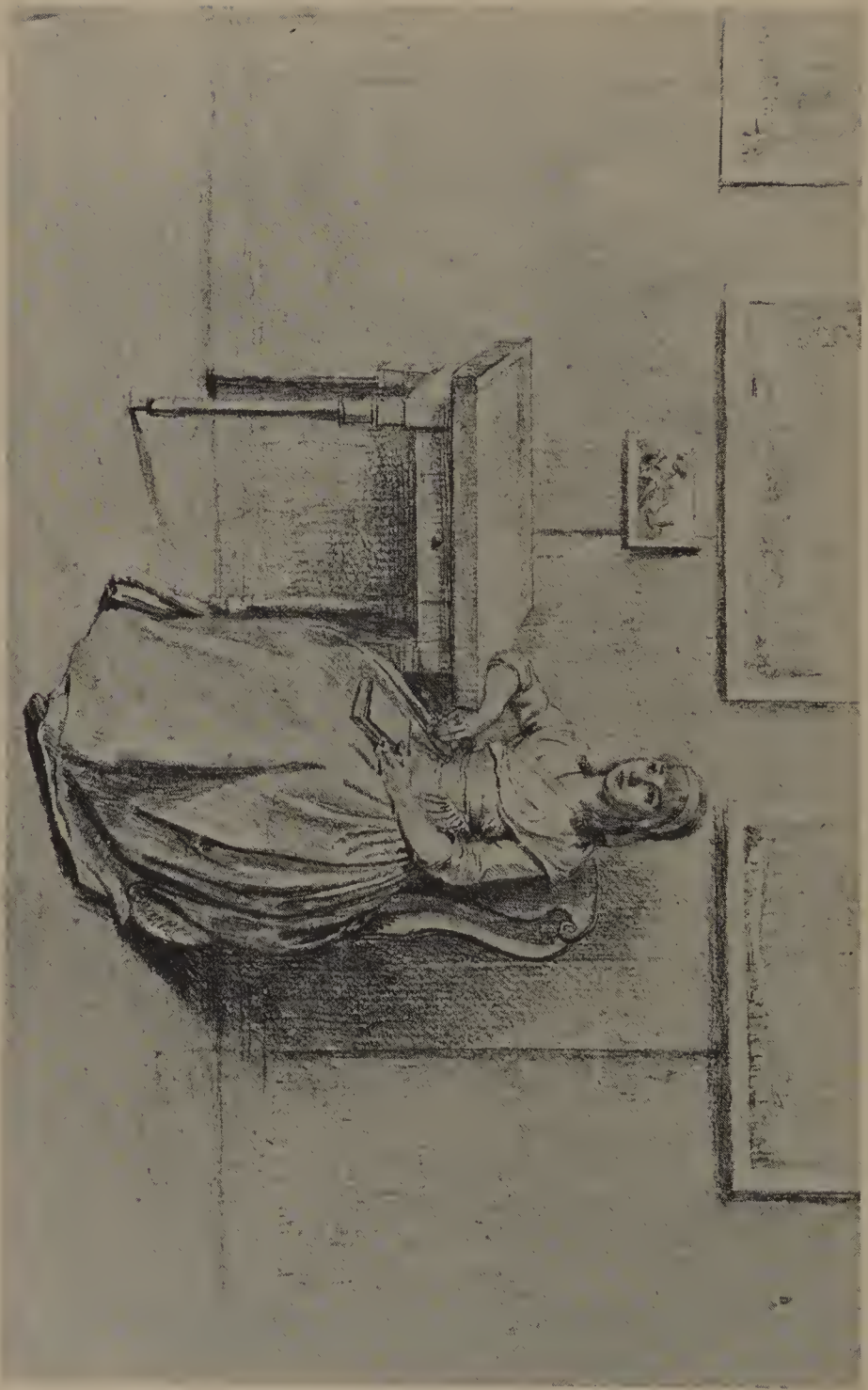
Rome,
20th December 1786.

. . . I am beginning to see the best things a second time, and the first amazement has turned to familiarity and a more accurate perception of the value of what I see.

I simply let everything come to meet me and do not force myself to look for this or that in things. I now look at art in the same way as I looked at nature; I am gaining what I have long striven for, a more complete conception of man's highest achievements, and my mind grows in this direction too and overlooks a wider expanse.

There are certain objects of which one can gain no adequate idea at all till one has seen them, and seen them in the original marble. The Apollo Belvedere towers above everything conceivable; even in the best copies one loses that last touch of warmth of this being, ever alive and young and free as only youth is. The same is true of a Medusa mask, a noble, beautiful face, where the fearful rigidity of death is most wonderfully expressed. I am trying to get a good copy so as to bring you what I can, but the magic charm of the original marble has not survived and the magic of the translucent stone, its yellowish tinge, almost a flesh-tone, has vanished; plaster never looks anything but chalky and dead in comparison.

What a joy it is though to see a craftsman's workshop where the



Christiane Vulpius – by J. H. Lips (1791)

most beautiful things are gathered together. We bought a huge head of Jupiter; it's in my room now. If only I could put it in your hall.

And yet all this gives me more worry and trouble than pleasure. The re-birth transforming me from within still goes on. I knew I should learn something here, but I did *not* know I should have to go back so far in my studies and unlearn so much. I welcome it all the more. I have surrendered myself entirely and it is not merely my understanding of art but also my moral sense that is undergoing a complete renewal. It would help so much to hear a friendly word from you at this strange, vital period in my life. At present I have to bear it all alone. But I have no wish to extort this from you; follow your own heart and I shall finish my course in silence; Tischbein and Moritz are of the greatest help to me; they do not know how much I owe to them, for here, again, *he* is silent to whom silence is habitual. Farewell. Remember me to the family. I shall go on writing. This year your birthday comes without my being able to enjoy it with you. How happy the next one will be, if you do not wholly shut me out from your heart.

197 To HERDER

Rome,
13th January 1787.

Here, my dear brother, is 'Iphigenie' . . .

Here once more is what I have wanted rather than what I have achieved. If only I have come nearer this work as you imagined it! For I felt you treasured more what this play might be than what it actually was, when you gave me your friendly help.

May it now come to you in a more harmonious form. Read it first as something entirely new, and then measure it against the old version if you like. Above all I want your help here and there with the sound of it. There are some lines I don't like and yet haven't managed to alter so far; you will find them noted in pencil on the pages I have marked. I have got so tired working at it. You will improve it with a stroke of the pen. I give you full power and authority. I have left some half-lines where they seemed good and have altered the metre on purpose here and there. Do take the play and let it benefit by your untiring goodness. Read it with your wife, let Frau von Stein see it, and together give it your blessing. And I'd like Wieland to see it too, for it was he who first suggested

bringing the halting prose into a more even step and made me all the more keenly conscious of the work's imperfection. Do what you like with it, then have it copied and send it in some good hour to Seidel with the rest—and forgive the trouble. I am a tormented stranger myself; it is not the Furies that visit me, it is the Muses and Graces and the whole might of the Immortal Gods and apparitions . . .

Farewell. I am tired and stupid with writing to-day. Don't forget me; do want me back again, then I will enjoy coming.

198 To Frau VON STEIN

Rome,
20th January 1787.

. . . I am so pleased my parcel arrived on your birthday which I celebrated here quietly on my own. I have got all your letters safely. And you mine. Thank you for the little song and for every kindly remembrance.

I have hopes of finishing 'Egmont', 'Tasso' and 'Faust' and of having enough new ideas to finish 'Wilhelm'. At the same time I am reading Livy and it would bewilder you if I tried to tell you about all else that presses on me.

Evening.

Your letter of 1st January has arrived and has brought me both joy and pain. I can say no more than that I have only *one* existence and this time I have staked it all and still do so. If I survive, in body and mind, if my nature, my mind, my good fortune, weather this crisis, then I shall make up to you what there is to make up a thousand times. If I perish, I perish; in any case I was fit for nothing more.

199 To Frau VON STEIN

Rome,
10th February 1787.

. . . I have spent the whole day sketching. I had wanted to do so for a long time. Here one looks at the scenery merely incidentally, hardly giving it a thought; but now with the fine weather my love of it revives. If I succeed, Krantz shall bring you a dozen or so little scenes in a new manner. I have to be on my guard till I get rid of my over-precise German style. I knew for some time what would

be good and an improvement, but finding the right thing in nature and reproducing it is hard, hard. One must have practice in order to make progress and I have no time to cultivate one particular subject.

Yet my poor little bit of sketching is priceless to me; it helps my conception of material things; one's mind rises more quickly to general ideas, if one looks at objects more precisely and keenly. Tell Fritz to be good and draw whatever he sees. I am very pleased indeed that I have got this matter of drawing clearer before I go to Naples. I feared that I might feel oppressed seeing the great works of art and not venture to put pencil to paper any more. But Nature has cared for all her children; even the least of them is not hindered by the greatest, or as the poet * says: 'A little man is none the less a man.'

200 To Frau VON STEIN

Rome,
21st February 1787.

I am using a moment during packing to write a word or two to you. This letter will not leave here till the third of March, so you shall never have a post-day without a letter, and then the Naples diary will follow. I have packed up everything to go still further South, still further from you! When shall I be here again? When shall I be packing to come nearer to you again? I hope everything will go well and my long weary life brighten towards the end.

I do not like to think about Rome now, nor recall all I have seen here, all I have made my own; it is treasure that must first ripen within me.

I only know that this packing comes easily to me and that I have already gathered enough strength and will to live in the future an active life in the North.

To you I cling with every fibre of my being. It is terrible how memories often lacerate me. Oh Lotte dear, you don't know what violence I have done myself and still do, and that the thought of not possessing you, however I take it, face it or put it, does after all wear me out and devour me. I can lend what forms I will to my love for you; yet always, always - - -

Forgive me for saying to you once again what for so long has stuck in my throat and made me dumb. If I could only tell you

* Goethe himself in the Prologue to his play *Puppenspiel*.

the feelings, the thoughts of my days, of my most solitary hours. Farewell. To-day I am confused, almost weak. Farewell. Love me. I am leaving here and you shall soon hear from me and get to know another part of the world through me.

201 To P. SEIDEL

*Naples,
15th May 1787.*

I got your letter of 7th March yesterday as I stepped off the boat, and your faithful words were very welcome indeed.

So my journey across Sicily is safely over and it will be a lasting treasure for all my life; I'll tell you a great deal when I come back . . .

It is to a certain extent true, alas, what you write of my 'Iphigenie'. When I felt obliged to re-write the play for the sake of art and its rules, I foresaw that the best passages had to suffer for the poor and mediocre ones to gain. You name two scenes that have obviously suffered. But read it again quite calmly once it's in print, and you'll feel what it has gained as a whole . . .

I will think over what you write of other matters and see what comes of it. I had Charles the Fifth's whim of wanting to see my own funeral while I was still alive, so I needn't wonder at bearers and grave-diggers playing their parts and the priests intoning the last rites.

Keep on as before, though, and please tell me sincerely what you think about everything that concerns me and anything else you choose; no excuses are needed. I've always regarded you as one of my good spirits, so go on fulfilling this little office unwearied . . .

202 To CARL AUGUST*

*Naples,
27th-29th May 1787.*

Your three dear and welcome letters were sent on from Rome the other day; the three previous ones arrived safely too. Now I am all the keener to get back to Rome, to hear from Lucchesini about the events in which you have played so great a part. I hope everything will turn out well and happily for you too. Frau von Stein will be able to tell you something of my safe return from Sicily and my excursion to Paestum. But I must wait with all the details till I

* Who at that time was active in the hope of founding a Union of the Princes in the Holy Roman Empire.

come back, for I have not been able to arrange my notes, nor can I do so as yet . . .

And now may I devote this sheet to my own affairs as you are seeing to them with such friendship and kindness.

I shall be extremely glad if the *Compte Rendu* [of my reorganisation of the Finances] turns out to your satisfaction, at least on the whole. May you now go on and finish this good work for which I can claim very little credit.

I heartily approve of the idea of putting Schmidt in special charge of the finances; he has my full approval and is in every way the right person. Just one reminder about the procedure, though; if you make him Vice-President and leave me more or less at the head, you will have one member of the Privy Council subordinate to another; which I think is not a very good idea. I would rather you released me from my former charge, with a kindly word (and the usual formula 'at his own request'). Then you could either make Schmidt regularly the President or put him at the head as I have been in actual fact (though not officially). But I leave it all to you. I always wanted simply to see you master in your own house. I cannot but be glad at anything you do to take things into your own hand. Make these changes when and as you think right. I hope to be in Frankfort at the beginning of September. I can perhaps stay for a while then with my Mother to arrange my last four volumes, to get my travel notes into better shape, perhaps to work at my 'Wilhelm Meister' and at some new ideas. All this would greatly ease my mind, for I must finish these things some day. So I should like to thank you most sincerely for your kind intention of relieving me. As affairs stand at present, you can do so without harm to them. Indeed I shall be more useful to you than I often was in the past, if you only leave to me what I alone can do, and assign the rest to others. My relation to official matters grew out of the personal one to you; so now let a new relationship arise between us, after so many years, out of this official one. I am ready for anything whenever and however you may need me. If you ask me about your plan of government—the symphony you intend to play—I shall always be glad to give you an opinion. And through my personal relation to Schmidt I shall be able to help in everything as you may wish it. I can see already how useful my journey has been; it has cleared my thoughts and cheered my life. Go on caring for me as you have done in the past and you will do me more good than I can do myself, than I may hope and expect. Give me back to myself, to my country and to

yourself, so that I can begin a new life, and a new life with you. I lay my whole destiny trustingly in your hand. I have now seen a great and beautiful part of the world, and the result has been that I want to live only with you and in your circle. If I can do this, less burdened with the detail to which I was not born, then I can live to be a joy to you and many. So accept my most grateful thanks for this latest proposal and may it bring you blessing as you carry it out.

Could you sometime do something for Voigt who is doing a great deal for me and whose usefulness will make you employ him more and more? You would certainly be helping your own service. Discuss it with Schmidt. He knows Voigt's merit, knows how unfairly he has been treated and can suggest how without discontenting others you can improve his position.

Farewell. Don't forget that few can be more truly yours than I am, and that the best in me is and always will be dedicated to your service. Don't forget me.

Let Frau von Stein and Herder know something of this in confidence, in case they worry or think strange thoughts.

I doubt if an answer to this letter would reach me in Rome. I'll write soon to say where letters should next be addressed to me.

203 To Frau VON STEIN

*Rome,
8th June 1787.*

... Tell Herder I am near the secret of the reproduction and organisation of plants, and that it is the very simplest you could imagine. In this climate one can make the best possible observations. Tell him I have discovered quite definitely and unmistakably where the germ lies hidden, that I already have a general conception of the rest and that there are only a few points now to fix more precisely. My 'Primal-Plant' [the archetype], will be the most extraordinary creation in the world, one that nature herself might envy me. With this model and the key to it one can go on and on indefinitely inventing plants, which must be consistent, I mean plants which, even though they do not exist, might exist, not just picturesque and poetic shadows or semblances, but possessing the quality of inner truth and necessity. The same law will be applicable to all other living things.

I am looking forward greatly to the Third Part of Herder's 'Ideas';

keep it for me, till I can say where it will reach me. He is certain to have given a magnificent rendering of mankind's beautiful dream that things may go better some day. I must admit I too am convinced that humanity will win in the end; my only fear is that at the same time the world will turn into a vast hospital and each of us become his neighbour's sympathetic nurse.

I am very sorry you have lost the little lion; I hardly think I shall be able to get you another little stone as neat, but I shall do my best. Perhaps you may find it again. Farewell; remembrances to everyone. This letter will reach you in Carlsbad. Think of me. Remember me to Ernst; hope dwells with the living, the dead alone are without it.*

I must do some work now.

I'll write again this day week. On Monday I go to Tivoli. This letter is sent off on Saturday, 9th June.

Angelika [Kaufmann] has made a delightful drawing to the passage in my 'Iphigenie': 'And have you too come down here already?'

204 To CARL AUGUST

Rome,
11th August 1787.

My very sincere thanks for your dear and welcome letter. You have made me very happy with it and crowned the joy I feel here and set my mind altogether at rest. You give me space to belong to myself yet without separating me from your own life. May it all turn out to your happiness. I was waiting to hear from you before deciding anything about my further stay; and now I think I am right in asking you to let me remain in Italy until Easter. I am capable of going some way in my study of art, and besides I find encouragement everywhere to develop my own little talent for drawing, and these months should be just enough to improve my knowledge and skill . . .

May I end by telling you of a wish of mine for immediately after I get back? It is to travel as a stranger through all your territories, to see both country and people for the first time as an experienced traveller and to get a good knowledge of your provinces. I should gain a new picture in my own way and a complete notion of them, and at the same time make myself fit once more for any kind of service you may be good enough to entrust to me. If Heaven

* Charlotte Stein's son Ernst died on June 14th.

favours my wishes I shall then devote myself for some time as exclusively to administration as I do now to the arts. I have been fumbling and experimenting for a long time and the moment has come to take a hand and act. May whatever you arrange turn out quite as you want, and be a joy to me too when I come back. And I hope, too, that your present important position [within the Empire] completely satisfies you and richly rewards your trouble, sacrifice and risks.

There is still a great deal I might say on one thing or another, but I am saving it all up for my next letter. Give me another sign soon of your thought and affection. My best respects to the Duchess.

205 To CARL AUGUST

Rome,
25th January 1788.

I cannot tell you how happy and content I was to get your letter; it came, too, on a very fine day. I might have thought yesterday was my happiest day in Rome, if anxiety about your health hadn't checked me again. I hurried out as soon as I got your letter. Tristram [Shandy] thinks a horizontal position the best for feeling joy or bearing sorrow, and I think wandering in the open is the best. I thought over a great many things, and sat down to write early this morning so that the courier can bring you a few pages when he goes back.

Many thanks first of all for the 'Tableau politique'. I am following the course of events in the newspapers, so it was all the pleasanter to have this to make my general ideas more complete and definite. The interest I feel in the part you play in the affairs of the Empire and the world is such a very close one. I am very happy whenever you are successful, and gratified that your trouble and sacrifice are recognised and rewarded by respectful confidence. Let me know from time to time how things are; your letter of yesterday gives me food for thought for some time.

You want me to wait for the Dowager-Duchess in Italy. Let me tell you frankly what I think of this.

Easter was the final term I had set for my sojourn in Italy and you too seemed to expect me back home in the spring. . . .

But if you desire me to stay on in Italy, it will be my duty to take charge of everything and to give [advice]. At this point it may seem proper for me to speak of my *ratio vitae* unto now.

The chief aim of my journey was to cure myself of the afflictions of mind and body that plagued me in Germany and finally made me of no use to anyone; the other was to satisfy my thirst for true art. I have succeeded fairly well in the first and completely in the second. . . .

Be as gentle as you can with yourself. I am never quite easy about your physical ills, and your spirits are bound to suffer too in a life of constant business but little enjoyment.

Keep your affection for me; that has made up to me for every former loss and helped me to bear every more recent one. You may be sure that however far we may seem to be going from one another, if our characters are really in harmony, we shall keep meeting again .

Some time, please, send me the full French address of the Coadjutor.

206 To CARL AUGUST

*Rome,
2nd April 1788.*

My dear Prince and Master, your letter giving me your ideas on my 'Egmont' has made me all the more eager to talk with you about this sort of subject and others as well. Remarks like those in your letter are not comforting to the author, but they are of great importance to the man, and as author and man have never been separate in me, I can appreciate and use observations like these. Some of the things you do not care for are implicit in the form and structure of the play and could not be altered without utterly undoing it. Other points, e.g. the treatment of Act I could be altered, given time and leisure, to suit your wishes. And others again, e.g. Machiavelli's remark, were easily struck out. The play was a difficult undertaking; I never thought I should finish it. And now there it stands, more as I was able to make it, than as it ought to have been written.

You certainly are the most dangerous reader the play could have. You are really leading the life with which the writer only plays, you can not be satisfied with the images of poetry, wavering from the realm of truth to that of falsehood, for you know better. And you cannot enjoy it, for you stand too near the actual facts to see them as a dramatic whole. But let's keep all this for the happy hours I am promising myself with you . . .

Weimar,
24th July 1788.

You have forestalled me with your very kind letter, and this shames me all the more that I still remain to a certain extent in your debt. I was bound to fear that you must think me inconsequent because when I arrived in Rome I indicated my desire to put myself at your service and then gave no further sign beyond a provisional answer. To excuse myself I can however say that things went very strangely and yet really quite naturally for me. I myself have realised this only since my return, from the letters I addressed from there to my friends and which I now sometimes see again.

At first I still had the wish and the courage to notice every detail, to treat it and to assess it in my own way. But the further I penetrated into things, the more I learned to view art in its full extent, the less I presumed to say, and my latest letters show a kind of growing speechlessness, or are, as Herder calls them, dishes where the food is missing.

Only after I have collected my own thoughts again shall I be able to judge what I have acquired, and then, alas, the feeling of what I still lack will at once follow. All I could bring before the public would be fragments that mean little and satisfy no one.

It is indeed unfortunate for me that Herder should be going away at the very time that I arrive here. Pleased as I am for him about this journey it is only natural for me to wish either that he could be of use to me here or I to him there.

My circumstances will not allow me to hope to visit you in Göttingen very soon, much as I should like to do so; for the greatest part of what I lack is just what you possess in such abundance.*

If I were to make a general confession of my views on classical and more recent art, I would say this: While one cannot have enough reverence for what has remained from classical and more recent times, it is the work of a lifetime rightly to comprehend this reverence, to recognise the worth of every work of art in its own way, and neither to ask too much from it as a work of man, nor on the other hand to be too easily satisfied.

If I felt an inclination to put anything to paper, it would be something very simple to begin with. For example how far a wise artist is governed by his material in framing his work thus and not otherwise. In this way the different varieties of stone often throw

* His knowledge of classical antiquity.

a most pleasant light on architecture; every change of material and mechanical means gives the work of art a different use and new limits. From everything I have been able to observe the ancients were inexpressibly skilful in this particular matter too, and I have often become deeply interested and absorbed in these observations.

So you see that I begin right from the ground and it may appear to some that I am treating things, most exclusively of the mind, in too material a way. But I may be allowed to observe that the gods of Greece were throned on Olympus, not in the seventh or tenth heaven, and that their gigantic stride was from mountain to mountain, not from sun to sun. It is a good thing space is making me stop. My kindest regards, and pray, let me have the pleasure of knowing that you remember me.

208 To MERCK

Weimar,
10th November 1788.

My dear friend, though the contents of your letter distressed me, I was very glad you felt like writing it. It must surely be a relief to be able and to want to say how unhappy one feels. Write to me sometimes, confide in me, and believe me even when you speak of your distress you are no trouble to me.

Keep your spirits up, separate in your mind as far as possible the physical, moral, and financial evils and look to yourself and your friends for healing, remedy, and help. I hope Schleiermacher is helping you to arrange the whole business, though you will have to deal with the details yourself. Farewell. I am contented and happy.

209 To The PRIVY COUNCIL

Weimar,
9th December 1788.

Herr Friedrich Schiller upon whom his Highness some years ago bestowed the title of *Hofrat* and who for a number of years has been living here or in the vicinity, has made a name for himself by his writings. And especially his recent history of the Revolt of the Netherlands from Spain seems to prove that he would achieve success in the sphere of history. As he is quite without any office or obligations, the question has been raised whether it would be possible to settle him in Jena and thus secure new advantage to the University there.

Those who know him also speak highly of his character and mode of life; his behaviour is serious and pleasing, and one can be certain that his influence on young people would be a good one.

He has been approached on this subject and has expressed himself as follows: he would be ready to accept the post as 'Professor extraordinary' at the University of Jena, even if this should be conferred on him in the first place without any salary. He would endeavour to concentrate on historical studies and to be of service to the University in this field.

Thereupon the undersigned, having had occasion to speak in Gotha of University matters, communicated this decision both to *Serenissimo nostro et Gothano*, and to Privy Councillor von Frankenberg, there, and the project found general approval, particularly as this 'acquisition' would be made without any outlay. *Serenissimus noster* then ordered the matter to be brought before his Privy Council by the undersigned, who herewith does so, recommending the matter for their consideration without delay, in order that the said *Hofrat* Schiller may be able to make his dispositions and preparations before Easter and qualify as *Magister*.*

210 To HERDER†

Weimar,
27th December 1788.

I have kept in touch with you, partly in spirit and partly through your letters to your wife. Thank you too for sending me a note from *the Town*. Having sympathised with you deeply makes me all the more pleased that things are going well now. It is only fair that my Roman friends should remember me, for my heart cannot rid itself of a glowing memory of that time. I cannot describe how moved I feel, and how often I repeat Ovid's lines

*Cum subit illius tristissima noctis imago
Quae mihi supremum tempus in urbe fuit.*

I feel all too strongly what I have lost since I left that element to come back here. I don't try to hide it from myself, but I do try my best to settle down here again. I am going on with my studies and hope some of them will bring me close to yours.

It is quite natural for you to concentrate almost exclusively on the statues. They are all that is left us, after all, from the better

* The appointment was made in March 1789.

† Travelling in Italy with the Dowager-Duchess.

periods of art. In the case of pictures one must do as Spinoza makes God do with error, project something into them, while the statues already come to meet us with a perfect idea.

I have been very fortunate with physiognomic discoveries in relation to the formation of ideal characters. I still remain secretive to everyone about it and I shall make all the more effort to achieve something, because I should like to surprise you on your return from Rome with how much has been achieved.

'Tasso' is still unfinished. I shall soon not be able to mention it; the eighth volume* will soon be in print; I shall send the first copy straight off to Angelika, so that you have it soon. Moritz has been here for three weeks now and does us all a great deal of good; the women especially have taken him to heart; he opens their eyes to all kinds of things. He is a thoroughly good creature and his stay here will be a great benefit to him.

I am pleased you wish Hirt well to the extent of pulling him up occasionally; he can easily do with it. He really is a good, useful man. Let him write his letter to me if it amuses him. Give him leave to do it.

I expect this letter will follow you to Naples. I hope it finds you in excellent spirits under that lovely sky.

Everything is going really beautifully and well with the Dowager-Duchess. If her return is like her entry, it will do her as much honour as pleasure.

I see your wife from time to time and oftener still whenever a spiritual physician is needed. I have administered several doses of moral *Cremor Tartari* to restrain the oscillations of her *Electra*-attacks. At present she is in high spirits. It is very good indeed that Emil has got over his smallpox so well, without loss to his appearance or temperament. If only I could rid your wife, and Frau von Stein, too, of their cursed attention to dreams. The world of dreams has always been like a deceptive lottery-urn with at most one or two trifling prizes and countless blanks. If you study those phantoms seriously, you yourself turn into a dream, a blank.

Farewell, and a happy conclusion to your journey. Greetings to everyone. Don't forget me.

We have deep snow and continuous severe cold, with occasional dreadful gales. I have packed myself completely in, in my little room, while you are wandering about in the beauty of the wide world. Everyone's turn comes.

* Of Goethe's 'Works'.

Don't worry, by the way. All the good people are glad that you enjoy this journey, and who wants to know about the others?

211 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
28th January 1789.

You are angry about my 'Letter' in the 'Merkur'; I gathered this from yourself and I have heard it at greater length from Moritz. Had I guessed that I could hurt you, the 'Letter' would not have been printed, nor would I have mentioned this matter further, either in writing or in conversation.

All I can say now is that I meant it seriously and honestly. My aim was to lay a foundation for our future common work on this scientific subject. If we can't do so, if our principles are too opposed, then it is better each of us should treat the matter in his own way. Better that than for us to keep trying to model ourselves on each other and finding we are further apart just when we thought we were meeting.

I am very much in earnest over anything that concerns the great eternal laws of nature, and my friends ought to show some indulgence when I speak of these matters.

Besides, whatever ought to be excused and put right, I leave to your kind heart, it must do most here.

212 To CARL AUGUST*

Weimar,
19th February 1789.

We hear about the Carnival being extended in your honour; I hope this will give you pleasure too.

Things are all the quieter here. Since the departure of Frau von Ziegesar who was mesmerised by Count Marshall, but really cured by Mephistopheles, and who is hardly likely to display her magical gifts in Weimar again, the loudest sounds we have heard here have been the pistol-shots in 'Fiesco von Genua'.†

The English visitors had Weimar Court-dress made to take away with them; they fancy themselves greatly with their epaulettes.

I am busy, but alas, there is little to show for it. My 'Tasso' is like an orange tree, it grows very slowly. Still if only it bears sweet fruit!

* In Berlin.

† A tragedy by Schiller

I had a long conversation at the theatre with Privy-Councillor Schmidt; we spoke of several matters which I should like to mention

There seems to be a plan to grant a licence to make hoses, like that which Frau Buchholz holds, to the rope-maker Waechter as well. We both fear that this will hinder rather than help the exercise of this craft. It is not so extensive as to allow several people to share in it with any appreciable profit. Competition will enforce a lowering of prices, strangers will profit by this, the goods will deteriorate, and each will exhaust the other. Frau Buchholz is energetic and deserves one's considering supporting and to a certain extent favouring her, particularly as she is not free of debt; she still owes the paymaster 700 and she is paying the interest quite correctly and trying to pay off the capital by degrees. If she got into arrears we would have no other course than to put her family house up for sale and ruin a person who up to now has bravely held her own and who was consequent and successful in what she undertook. I am not prepared, as others are, to say that this is a private scheme of Major Germar's with whom she has never stood well. But there may be something personal at the back of it. The President and I think alike and only beg that you will consider the matter again. I do not know what grounds have been given for splitting up this craft . . .

I have heard nothing of Moritz; may I ask you to give him the enclosed note?

I have also had no answer yet from Arens; I am most anxious to have one. The President has kindly invited me to take part *pro virili* in the important work of building the palace. The best way one can help in the matter is by looking after the people who are planning wisely, and accurately carrying out what is to be done. We none of us understand it and at the best can only choose. May everything go well; and as you have the wish to build, I am sure you will help to ensure us the blessings of peace.

I am most curious to hear your account of several people when you return.

The Duchess seems in good health, the Prince likewise. I have let Riedel know of the good opinion you expressed of him; this has greatly cheered him, and a man in good spirits does at least do all he can when he already has leanings in that way.

Farewell. My respects to the fair ones, and think of me at favourable moments.

I am grateful to you for the letter you left me, though it has distressed me in more than one respect. I hesitated to answer it, for in a case like this it is hard to be sincere and not to hurt.

My return from Italy has already proved how much I love you and how well I realise the duty I have towards you and Fritz. I should still be there, if the Duke had had his way. Herder was leaving for Italy, and as I didn't foresee any prospect of being useful to the Hereditary Prince, I have hardly had any other object than yourself and Fritz. I don't wish to reiterate all that I left behind in Italy; you have received my confidence in this matter in an unfriendly enough spirit.

When I arrived you were unfortunately in a strange state of mind, and I must confess I was very much hurt at how you received me and how others did. I saw Herder and the Dowager-Duchess set off, an empty place eagerly offered to me in their coach. I stayed for the sake of those friends for whose sake I had also returned, and yet at that very time I was forced to listen repeatedly to the obstinate assertion that I might as well have stayed away, that I was out of sympathy with others, etc. And all this before there could have been any idea of a connection which appears to offend you so deeply.†

And what is this connection? Who loses anything by it? Who lays claim to the feelings I bestow on the poor creature? who to the hours I spend with her?

Ask Fritz, ask Frau Herder, ask anyone who knows me well, if I am now less sympathetic, less communicative, less active in the interests of my friends? If, on the contrary, I do not now for the first time fully belong to them and to society?

And surely it would be a miracle if I were to lose my relationship to you, the best, the closest I ever had.

How vividly I have felt that it still exists on every occasion when I found you disposed to talk about matters of interest.

But I freely admit that I cannot endure the manner in which you have treated me up till now. When I was talkative, you sealed my lips; when I was communicative, you accused me of indifference; when I was active on behalf of my friends, of coldness and neglect.

* Who had gone to Ems to take the waters.

† With Christiane Vulpius, who later became his wife.



Roman Villa by Moonlight – wash drawing by Goethe

You watched my every look, you criticised my gestures, my manner, and constantly rendered me *mal à mon aise*. How could confidence and frankness thrive when you deliberately repulsed me?

I would add more but for the fear that in your present state of mind it might be calculated to insult rather than appease you.

It is a thousand pities that you have scorned my advice so long in the matter of coffee and have introduced a diet that is exceedingly harmful to your health. As if it were not hard enough morally to overcome such impressions, you are using a physical medium to strengthen the morbid harrassing power of your sad fancies. For a while you seemed to acknowledge its harmfulness, and your love for me led you to avoid it for some time, and you felt well in consequence. May the cure and the journey do you good. I do not entirely abandon the hope that you will see me as I am. Farewell. Fritz is happy and comes often. The little Prince is lively and in high spirits.

214 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
8th June 1789.

I have seldom found any page more difficult to write than my last letter to you, and it was no doubt as disagreeable for you to read as for me to write it. But I have at least opened my lips and I hope that we shall never again close them towards each other. I have never known greater happiness than in confiding in you, as I have always done without reserve; prevented from doing so, I am a different person and must continue to change still more.

I make no complaint about my present situation; I have reconciled myself to it quite well and hope I shall persevere in it although the climate has already begun to affect me again, and sooner or later will render me unfit for much that is good.

When one considers the cold, damp summer season, the severe winters; when the Duke's outward relations and other circumstances deprive and will deprive everything here of consistency and result; when it is well-nigh impossible to name anyone who feels at ease in his position;—it needs strength not to be weighed down, to maintain a certain degree of cheerfulness and activity and not to make a plan by which one could gradually free oneself. But if on top of this an unhappy relationship develops to those nearest, then one really does not know where to turn. I say this as well for *you*

as for *myself*, and I assure you it causes me infinite pain to distress you so deeply in these circumstances.

I shall say nothing to excuse myself. Indeed I only want to beg you: let me have your help, so that the connection which is so distasteful to you does not degenerate but remains as it is.

Give me your confidence once more; consider the whole matter from a natural point of view, permit me to speak calmly and frankly about it, and I can then hope that everything between us will become pure and good again.

You have seen my mother and given her great pleasure, to Frau La Roche too. Let me too find warmth in your return.

Arens, the architect, is here at the moment and I am again enjoying the company of an artist. Fritz will learn a great deal in these few days, intelligent as he is he will be quick in noticing what is right.

Herder is unfortunately showing a considerable and almost definite desire for another post in his letters; it will be difficult to retain him in Weimar, and if retained to make him happy.

I have been in Belvedere for a week with the Prince. The child is a great joy to me.

Farewell! Think lovingly of me. 'Tasso' is nearly finished. I shall not believe it is finished till I see it in print.

I have not been doing much else. Farewell. Love from Fritz.

1789-1794

Frankreichs traurig Geschick, die Grossen mögen's bedenken!
Aber bedenken fürwahr sollen es Kleine noch mehr.
Grosse gingen zu Grunde: doch wer beschützte die Menge
Gegen die Menge? Da war Menge der Menge Tyrann.

Venezianische Epigramme, 55

France's sad fate—let the great ponder it, but let lesser
men ponder it still more. The great were destroyed; yet
who protected the masses from the masses? The masses
were tyrants to the masses then.

Venetian Epigrams, 55

THE break with Frau von Stein was a terrible grief for Goethe; 'I had a love, more precious to me than all else; I have it no longer; be silent and bear the loss' he wrote soon afterwards in his *Venezianische Epigramme*. It is therefore not surprising that he now was glad of any opportunity of leaving Weimar, though the home that Christiane made for him in the house on the Frauenplan, a gift from the Duke, became dearer and dearer to him, especially when at Christmas 1789 his son August was born.

Goethe went first to Venice to escort the Dowager Duchess, who had been travelling in Italy, back to Weimar. Shortly afterwards he went to Silesia on the invitation of Carl August who was taking part there in an armed demonstration against Austria, though the Russian-Austrian war against Turkey otherwise affected Weimar as little as had the War of Independence which had just finished in America, or the French Revolution which was about to begin. The first sign of unrest showed at the University of Jena when in 1792 450 students, about half of the total number, expressed their dissatisfaction with some of the University rulings by leaving Jena for Erfurt, though they returned four days later.

In 1792 the war in Europe made itself felt in Weimar. Carl August with the Weimar Corps had joined the allied German forces which advanced against the armies of the Revolution in the early summer of that year; Goethe followed the Duke and did so again in 1793 when the Corps took part in the siege of Mainz, then in the hands of revolutionary Clubs and French troops; after the surrender of the city in August Goethe returned to Weimar. Of his writings at that time *Der Bürger-general*, *Die Aufgeregten*, *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* and *Das Mädchen von Oberkirch* (which remained a fragment) give *genre* pictures of the Revolution, while *Der Grosscophta* deals with the story of the diamond necklace of Marie Antoinette. Though started earlier, the following works were finished and published in the years 1789 to 1794: *Faust, ein Fragment*, *Römisches Carneval*, *Römische Elegien*, and *Venezianische Epigramme*, all fruits of Goethe's two Italian journeys; the old fable *Reineke Fuchs* as an epic in twelve cantos; in addition there were several important scientific works, *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, a biological-botanical essay, and *Über die Gestalt der Tiere*, an anatomical essay. Optics, mainly the theory of colour, began to interest Goethe more and more at this time. His official work continued, though he was now able to concentrate more than before on those branches which were of special interest to him: his old favourite the silver mines at Ilmenau; the University for which he established a Botanical Garden; the College of Art for which he secured Heinrich Meyer, a Swiss artist, as a very able teacher; the newly founded Court Theatre of which he assumed the management—it replaced the private company of actors that was all that Weimar had had up till then.

Weimar,
5th November 1789.

First of all I hope your bad tooth has not been troubling you; the weather has been fine so everything else should be settling down too.

I have been well and busy. Fragments of 'Faust' are written, that is, it is finished for the present in its own way. Mittelsdorf is making a copy. He has probably never been given anything as strange to copy. It is odd, indeed, to see all these queer things in the same handwriting that is accustomed to put 'To our trusty and well-beloved lieges'. I hope that 'Faust' in this new form too will give you a pleasant evening.

Both the little plays, ['Jery and Baetely' and 'Scherz, List und Rache'] that are to come in the seventh volume had been finished off already and I feel free at last now this duty is done. Now I can turn to other things.

I am busy with Greek and have good hopes for it.

Our mining troubles are clearing up finely . . .

I was in Jena yesterday and enjoyed the splendid day in the Saale valley; it looked beautiful. The cutting for the canal is going to be a success too. The meadowland has been taken over, the trees are felled and the new cut is marked out. I have seen the whole thing three times now, when the water was high, average and low, and I am quite certain it will be what we want. But a careful watch will have to be kept for some years to see what the river will do. It won't cost much . . .

Voigt has been to Apolda with Ludecus and has made good preparations for distributing bread to those who need it most. He left me the records, but I have not yet had time to read them . . .

Every time I come back into my new quarters [in the Jägerhaus], I enjoy their delightful situation, the fine rooms and all the comfort—and I enjoy having you to thank for all this too. I have already walked to Belvedere several times and it doesn't seem so far now. Reichert's botanical supply keeps growing; unfortunately the most interesting plants have to be kept indoors. I hope this letter finds you happy wherever it reaches you.

* Attending army manoeuvres.

Weimar,
14th December 1789.

It is extremely good and kind of your Highness to remember us so often. I am with you in thought more often than I care to own, and I like to hear that all goes well with you.

Your Highness is bringing back a number of things already, and I should be most grateful if you could also obtain specimens of minerals from Sicily, especially of rocks, lavas and basalt . . .

Bury is lucky to be seeing and enjoying the beautiful city of Naples, in your suite. The good man deserves your gracious support, and I needn't recommend him to you further. Lips is here now; if Meyer—this in confidence—gets better from the illness that has compelled him to go home [to Switzerland], I expect to see him here too. If your Highness retains Bury, we shall be able to start quite a nice academy here. There is no living without artists, either in the south or the north . . .

I keep remembering those happy days at the other side of the Alps as I gradually arrange my possessions. My 'Roman Carnival' has found friends even in Germany. Lack of confidence induced the publishers, Bertuch and Krause, to bring out a small edition, that is now out of print, and yet nobody dares print a second one.

My eight volumes are ready in manuscript; it's the publisher's slowness that is holding up the edition. They haven't even finished printing 'Tasso'. Meanwhile I am busy with natural philosophy. A short botanical essay [on the Metamorphosis of Plants] will be out at Easter.

That's how we seek happiness through hard work, and try by the light of our intelligence to dissipate the mists in the atmosphere.

What magnificent weather you must be having, it has been so mild here. I wish you perfect health and contentment to enjoy every happy hour.

Will your Highness please bring back any kind of seeds, no matter what sort, from Naples? Whatever is common there, will be useful here in one way or another for our scientific research.

Best wishes to Einsiedel and your lady-in-waiting . . .

* In Italy.

*Weimar,
Mid-February 1790.*

If you think your prolonged absence needs some excuse, I feel I must strengthen your confidence by saying that in these circumstances† I too would not quit the position I had taken up. It is of the greatest importance for you to keep informed about everything at the present stage, if not to take vigorous action too.

The iron is hot; if there is no war, Europe will now be forged into a new shape and this shape will last for some time . . .

*Venice,
3rd April 1790.*

I arrived safely in Venice on the 31st March, after a pleasant journey. The weather was mainly fine, especially through the Tyrol. On this side of the Alps, from Verona here, I have had a continual north-east wind, a clear sky, but cold weather. To-day, the 2nd of April, it snowed here. The trees in the country are very far back; near Bozen the almonds and peaches were in blossom, and round Verona it was beautiful too, on the slopes of the hills, though the flat country does not look Italian yet. Now I am among the amphibia and I shall soon grow accustomed to it. I have found no trace of the Dowager-Duchess as yet, and Einsiedel gave me the address of an inn that does not exist in Venice at all. Quite by chance I have secured good quarters, I have a real Musäus as landlord. I am gradually refreshing my idea of this strange city and exploring what is most noteworthy in it.

This journey has shaken me up well and will do me good in mind and body.

By the way I must tell you in confidence that it has dealt a mortal blow to my love for Italy. Not that I have been in any way unfortunate—how could I?—but the first bloom of affection and curiosity has fallen and I find I have become in varying degrees rather more *Smelfungian*. Besides there is my affection for the *erotio* whom I left behind me and for the little creature in swaddling-clothes; let me commend them both, like everything that is mine, to you.

I fear that my [Roman Elegies] have reached their full number and the little book seems now closed. But I am bringing a *Libellum*

* In Berlin.

† Threat of war in Eastern Europe.

Epigrammatum back with me, which I hope will enjoy your approval.

There are some moments when I wish I could see you beside me, only so that you might enjoy Germany all the better.

This here is in the midst of the water and we are in the midst of the land: the best element is that in which one can be happy in one-self and with one's own family. My very warm greetings.

219 To FRITZ VON STEIN

Landshut,
31st August 1790.

Thanks for your note. If you look on the map you will see the place I am writing from, near the Bohemian frontier. But I am going to spend a few days in the county of Glatz and then go back to Breslau. I have seen a lot I should have liked you to see, useful to you, but rather wasted on me. I'd be able to tell you a great deal, if only I weren't often as bad at talking as I am at letter-writing. In the midst of all the hubbub here, I have begun my essay on anatomy of animals. But, not to become too theoretical, I have also been writing a comic opera ['Der Conte']. So you see I can stand a good deal. I hope you can too.

Good-bye. Greetings to your parents. Go on loving me, however queer I am.

220 To J. F. REICHARDT*

Weimar,
25th October 1790.

My dear Reichardt, your letter finds me in a most unpoetic state. I am busy with my little work on anatomy and anxious to get it finished by Easter. Thanks for taking charge of my 'emancipated poetical children'; I don't think about them any more now. Whatever you like to do with them, I shall be glad and pleased.

It would cost me a good deal to undertake an opera of any size at the moment. I have no thoughts for that sort of thing; but if your King orders it, I shall be glad to obey, take myself in hand and do my best.

I am looking forward to my 'Jery and Baetely'† and the other things too.

* In Berlin.

† In a setting by Reichardt.

I have not thought any more about the 'Conte'.* Things like that can only develop in their own element. There's no song and music round me at the moment. Unless you can count a little fiddling for the dance. By the way, you will do me the greatest kindness if you send me as quickly as ever you can half a dozen or half a hundred dances from your rich store of rhythm, for 'English dances' and for 'Quadrilles'. If only they are in character, we'll invent the figures ourselves. Forgive the impertinence of asking this of a creative artist. But even the least work of art must be made by a master if it is to be right and true. . . .

221 To F. JACOBI†

Weimar,
20th March 1791.

The *Fourth Report* on the progress of the Ilmenau mines gives me an occasion to write to you, my dear friend, and I wish the meeting of the shareholders would give you occasion to visit our mountains. But as this is improbable you may like to hear something at least of me at this opportunity, and I of you. I almost feel as if I had not written to you the whole of last year. I was in Venice again and have seen Lombardy for the second time, with great benefit; after that I went to Silesia and saw great preparations for a war, and then travelled peacefully home once more. On both journeys, and after my return too, there was much that gave me pleasure. You can easily imagine that in the meantime I have not neglected my studies and my work in everything you know I love, and I can flatter myself that I have advanced in a number of them. In the way and along the lines you will have seen in my little botanical work I have been continuing my observations on every realm of nature, and applying all the skill which is granted to me to investigate more closely the general rules by which every living creature is built up. Time will tell what I shall achieve.

I expected to publish the essay on the anatomy of animals by Easter, but it will have to ripen for another year. One does not see what one is doing in a work of this kind, because all one's efforts tend towards the centre, and simplification is the aim.

As a contrast to this I have now an occupation in prospect that is all the more directed to the outside and which aims only at

* Published later not as an opera but as the play *Der Grosscophta*.

† Who was a shareholder in the Ilmenau mines.

appearance. It is the chief directorship of the theatre which is being set up here. I am going to work very *piano*, it may be that something will come of it for the public and for me. At least I shall feel it my duty to study this subject more closely and to write a few performable plays every year. Time will show what else.

My life on the whole is enjoyable and pleasant, I have every reason to be satisfied with my situation and simply to wish for myself that my present state continues. I hope the same for you too. Do write to me and tell me how you are living and what is occupying you.

Lips has drawn my portrait and is busy engraving it; I have every hope it will be a success. You will find it announced in the *Mode Journal* and the *Literatur Zeitung*. If you would like to have some, write to me and I can see that you get good copies. Lips is going to see to the reproduction himself and will likely be going to Cassel about it.

Farewell. Love to your family. Love me still and do write to me.

Please send the second copy of the *Report* to Princess Gallitzin, with my respects.

222 To S. T. SÖMMERING

Weimar,
31st May 1791.

Your work on human anatomy has been a most delightful present. It reached me at a moment when my thoughts were scattered; I am just preparing to be away from home for some time. As soon as I have a little time to myself, I shall study your work and enjoy the results of your researches. I certainly shall be stimulated to continue—and perhaps to complete—several essays I began last winter. And your work will be a pleasant way of keeping in touch with you even at a distance. Reading your instructive writings I have often thought how fortunate you are that your profession leads you to study anatomy and that this is the duty to which you can devote your life. Whenever I free myself from other things and study this subject more closely and accurately, I long to devote all my time to it. I am certain that this latest work of yours, like your others, will show that you are a man who reflects on the subject he is treating. And so you are able to make clear what is confused and to present

dry material in an attractive form. You are at home in a country where I am only an occasional visitor. My observations can only be snatched as it were in passing, but I hope they may have some value for you in the future. Let me repeat my thanks for what you have sent and beg to be remembered.

223 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
28th October 1791.

I am writing from my optical laboratory to ask if you would like to come and see some fine experiments? And I do hope you'll have dinner with me to-day. It's a long time since we had a chat.

224 To KRAKOW*

Weimar,
14th March 1792.

In your note, which clearly voices the opinions of a most conscientious man, you state that you wish to leave our theatre at Michaelmas and intend to give up acting entirely. You refer to the state of your health, which I know, and I sympathise with you. Let me imitate your frankness and confess I wish very much that you could summon the courage to feel like remaining with us till Easter.

I would try to make things easier for you in every way, not casting you in new plays unless you yourself wished it, and freeing you after Michaelmas from any of the older roles you would like to relinquish. You would, therefore, retain only those roles that entirely suit you, that you fully command, and would appear more seldom but with greater ease and satisfaction.

I feel confident of answering for these conditions towards the Court and the public, and have no apprehension that I shall be blamed for thus endeavouring to retain for a longer period a favourite actor and to enable him to retire from the stage more easily and with honour. But should you find your condition makes your remaining under any circumstances burdensome, I am prepared, however reluctantly, to release you at your own desire from a contract you can have no joy or pleasure in fulfilling.

My wish is simply and solely that you should choose whichever way ensures your own well-being.

* An actor.

Weimar,
18th April 1792.

The Ancients used to begin their letters with the words '*si vales bene est, ego valeo*'. It would be as well to head mine with some such solemn formula, to excuse my silence; for instance '*ignoscas tarde scribenti*' or 'i.t.s.' for short, and this abbreviation could then be read in different ways. I am sorry to have to confess that I have only sat down to this letter because Voigt wants me to. Countess Louise Stolberg, who is here now, has written to a friend of hers twice a week for the last twenty four years. A collection of these letters must be a general and family chronicle worth reading. But I seem even further from this virtue of letter-writing than from those cardinal virtues that Meyer has lately been studying in art.

I am probably the last of your Weimar correspondents, so I have the best excuse for not writing about what has been happening since you left—you will know it all already. As for my own affairs, things are going so evenly and gently, I am like the hour-hand on a clock; you don't notice I am moving and you need time even to notice I have moved . . .

Meyer is busy. For practice he has painted my little Family (not at all a Holy Family). He is gradually gaining the confidence of the young people†; one can't expect that suddenly in this conceited world.

The theory of light and colour is occupying more and more of my thinking, and from that point of view I can call myself one of the children of light. Farewell. I wish success to your undertaking, and don't stop loving me with my light and dark sides.

Weimar,
19th July 1792.

A number of students in Jena are dissatisfied with the measures§ thought necessary to ensure public order, and apparently they are contemplating leaving the University for a while and going to Erfurt or elsewhere. Their idea seems to be to treat from there with the *patribus* as from a *monte sacro* and to make what terms they choose.

No-one has any wish to detain students who do not want to con-

* Who with the Weimar regiment was joining the Prussian armies for war with France.

† At the Art College.

‡ Coadjutor to the Archbishopric of Mainz, to which Erfurt belonged.

§ Against duelling etc.

form to the regulations thought most advisable for the public good. The University will be all the keener to let them go in peace, as it is sure to gain by this crisis which will rid it of rude and turbulent members. So this otherwise unpleasant event may be to its benefit after all.

The Privy Councillors have commissioned me to inform your Grace of these facts; and I feel it my duty to do so, especially as I have reason to think you will be glad to know in advance of these emigrants' arrival, though perhaps the rumour of it has already spread.

It seems that we here are not to be spared at least a likeness of those greater evils elsewhere; it is fortunate that this is only a childish ailment, and I hope most of the patients will recover from it.

I trust I shall have the pleasure of calling on your Grace in the next few days; please let me know then your further wishes for my journey to the Rhine and Main districts.

227 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Gotha,
9th August 1792.*

Nothing is any use if one leaves those one loves; time just goes by and there's nothing to take their place. We have arrived in Gotha and I mean to leave again soon; I can't settle anywhere. Meyer will tell you how as soon as I got to Erfurt I was tormented by bed-bugs, and here too I dread the night. Even the carpenters are not so bad for they only hammer in the morning. But I'm quite well and hope to feel still better once I have turned my back on Eisenach. I'm sending you only my fondest greetings from here, with the assurance that I love you dearly. But from Frankfort you'll soon be getting the most charming small parcel. Good-bye; love me, keep everything going well and kiss our little boy.

228 To F. JACOBI

*Frankfort,
18th August 1792.*

My yesterday's letter will have told you how things are with me. I go to Mainz on Monday, 20th, and straight back to the Army from there. The tent and canteen will compare badly with my mother's house, beds, meals and cellar, especially for one who does not wish for the death of either aristocratic or democratic sinners. I enjoyed

seeing my old friends and my growing native city. But one can't help feeling bored now in any society; wherever two or three meet, it is the same political song, four years old, with the *pros* and *cons* ground out, and not even with variations, but just the bare theme. So I would I were back among the hills of Thuringia, where I can at least lock my house and garden doors. I would advise you too, therefore, to stay at home; for one does not go travelling to see and hear the same old thing at every stage.

I do not know how things are round Carlsruhe, but, with the present arrangements, it seems impossible for an enemy to get there. The newspapers, alas, get everywhere, and they are my worst enemies at present.

I had hoped to stay here at least a month and I would willingly have come as far as Mainz or even Koblenz to meet you. I now expect to return later, probably during the bad weather. I would have so much liked to see you, to tell you of my household and to form new bonds of interest.

Greetings to your dear sisters, to Herder's, whom I am going to miss now too; and don't forget me. I shall write as soon as I am on French soil.

229 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

Frankfort,
21st August 1792.

My dear little one, I'm leaving Frankfort to-day and making for Mainz. I just want to tell you that all has gone well with me, except that I had to eat and drink too much. I'll enjoy my meals more when my dear little cook gets them ready for me again. The parcel is leaving here to-day and will reach you soon after this letter. I wish I could be a little mouse and watch you unpack it. I rather enjoyed making it up. Keep everything carefully. Adieu, dear child. I haven't made eyes at anyone else. Just go on loving me as I love you. Adieu; remember me to Herr Meyer, kiss our little boy and write soon.

230 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

Praucourt,
28th August 1792.

I arrived at the Duke's camp yesterday and found him well and in good spirits. I'm writing from his tent, with the noise of men

felling wood on one side and burning it on the other. We have had almost continuous rain and the men can't get dry day and night; so I'm lucky to be able to spend the night in the Duke's coach. Food is scarce and dear; everybody just tries his best to make life a little more tolerable. On the whole people are cheerful and make jokes of this and that. Yesterday we soon forgot rain and mud over the arrival of two captured flags—sky-blue, rose-red and white—some horses, two cannon and a number of rifles . . .

I am writing this on French soil not far from Longwy, which the Prussians took a few days ago.

Don't worry about me, I love you dearly and I'm coming back as soon as I can. Kiss our little boy; I think of him often, and of everything about you, even of the kohlrabi we put in the garden and so on. Good-bye, dearest.

231 To C. G. V. VOIGT

*Jardin Fontaine, at the gates
of Verdun,
10th September 1792.*

You know probably already that the army has halted again after a leap from Longwy to Verdun to get ready for the next, rather like a grasshopper. It may indeed have taken the leap by the time you get this letter. It is most interesting to be here on the spot where nothing irrelevant can be allowed to happen. Even for an idle spectator it is fascinating to see war under such a great general [as Ferdinand of Brunswick], and also the French at closer quarters. It keeps one's mind busy, giving an occasional glance at the map and trying to deduce what is going to happen from what is happening. One can see this much at least, that it is going to be a long business. It's a huge affair even when undertaken with such great forces.

We both know how hard it is even with four pumps to control the little water there is in a mine.

I quite approve in advance of whatever you decide about the mines; I'd be glad to hear that the new shaft has been sunk. Perhaps this may coincide with our entry into Paris.

May I ask you to do me a kindness in a personal matter? I found out in Frankfort that I could withdraw a sum and place it in Weimar. I have wanted for some time to own a little place, especially that in the Lobeda-Griesheim district. It was once for sale, but those concerned

came to some agreement again. Is it possible to find out how things stand now? And if the place is to be had at a reasonable price? Your nearest line of approach will be through Bürgermeister Bohl.

The more one travels about, the more one sees that men are born to villainage, tied to the soil. Besides, my recent visit to my home-town has more than ever convinced me that it's not the place for me. Be good enough to say nothing of this matter and my remarks to anyone . . .

232 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*In camp near Verdun,
10th September 1792.*

I have written you several little letters and I don't know when they will start arriving one after the other. I didn't number them, but I'm beginning to do it now. Let me tell you again that I am in good health; you know already that I love you tenderly. If only you were here too, now! They have great wide beds here and you wouldn't need to complain like at home sometimes. Oh, my dear one, there's nothing like being together. We'll never forget that once we are together again. Just think! We are so near Champagne and I can't get a decent glass of wine. Things will be better than that with us in the Frauenplan once my dear little one is seeing to the kitchen and cellar.

Be my own dear housewife, and get the house in good order for me. Look after our little boy and go on loving me.

Don't forget to love me. For I often have jealous thoughts and imagine that you might like someone else better, for I find many men handsomer and more likeable than I am. But you must not find that, you must think me the best, for I love you dreadfully, and nothing else pleases me. I often dream about you, all sorts of muddled things but always that we love each other. And that's how I want it to stay.

I've ordered two feather-mattresses and pillows and lots of other good things through my mother. See that our nice house is spick and span; I'll see to everything else. There will be all sorts of things in Paris; in Frankfort there'll be another parcel. I've sent off a small hamper of liqueurs to-day and a little parcel of sweetmeats. It's good to send things for the household. Just go on loving me, be my faithful child, and the rest will settle itself. What use was anything

else to me as long as I hadn't your love? Now I have that, I want to keep it. For I am yours. Kiss our little one, remember me to Meyer and love me.

233 To KNEBEL

*In camp near Hans,
27th September 1792.*

It was very nice to hear from you and I am hurrying to send you even just a note as some post will be going soon. I have got to know a good deal during these last four weeks, and this model campaign provides me with thought for some time to come. I am extremely glad to have seen it all myself, and to be able, when this important time is mentioned, to say '*et quorum pars minima fui*'.*

We are in a strange position. After the taking of Verdun it was discovered that the French had occupied the Forêt d'Argonnes and closed the pass between Clermont and Ste. Menehould. An attempt was made to turn their flank and with General Clairfait's help they were dislodged from Grandpré and our whole army then passed through to take up a position between Ste. Menehould and Chalons. Once the enemy was sighted (on the 20th), a thunderous cannonade began. When at last one had grown tired of it, everything became quiet again and so it has remained this past week. Even the outposts have ceased their fire. The French are about where they were before, and we can reach Verdun only by way of Grandpré. Dreadful weather and shortage of bread, which is slow to reach us, make this lull even more miserable. The general opinion about the hitherto despised enemy begins to rise and, as often happens, now rises higher than it ought.

We shall soon know what the decision will be. There are very few ways out of a position like this.

The Duke is very well and so am I, despite my getting thinner every day, as my coats and waistcoats testify. I am quietly busy in my own way, thinking out a number of things; I have made good progress in optics.

I am reading French authors I would otherwise never have known, so I am spending my time as well as I can. It would all be different if the weather were good: one could attempt a number of things and see more people; but as it is one doesn't want to leave the tent for days. This bit of country is hideous . . .

* Virgil, Aeneid II 6: *et quorum pars magna fui*

*Weimar,
24th December 1792.*

My very dear Mother, the hope of seeing you and my worthy Frankfort friends has gone again, for I had to return from Düsseldorf to Weimar by way of Paderborn and Cassel.

How I have been worrying about you!* How sad I have been at my countrymen's present circumstances! How I have admired, too, their behaviour in such a critical situation! Nothing could possibly have been more flattering than the request: would I be prepared to take a seat on the Town Council if chosen by lot? This request reaches me at the very time when in the eyes of Europe, indeed of the whole world, it is an honour to be born a citizen of Frankfort.

The friends of my youth whom I have had so much cause always to value could not have given me a better proof that they still remember me than by holding me worthy to take part in public affairs in their town at this important time.

Your letter reached me in the midst of the tumult of the war, and it cheered the sad hours I had to live through; I could then still hope to see my beloved home-town shortly.

I intended, then, to return my thanks personally for the signal honour done me, and at the same time to explain fully and frankly my present situation.

Every right-thinking man is bound to feel a preference for his own country. It would, therefore, be a painful sacrifice for me to decline occupying a position any citizen must be glad to accept, and indeed ought to accept, particularly at this time, but that my circumstances here are so happy, and I may say favourable beyond anything I have deserved.

His Highness the Duke has treated me for so many years with extreme favour; I owe him so much that I should be grossly ungrateful, were I to leave my post at a moment when the state has most need of faithful servants.

So please, convey my earnest thanks to the worthy men who have shown themselves so well-disposed towards me; assure them of my most sincere gratitude, and try to uphold their confidence in me for the future.

As soon as circumstances make it at all possible, I shall follow my own inclinations and give full personal expression to what I can

* Frankfort had been occupied by the French for a short time.

only touch upon in this letter. May the source of my worthy countrymen's present anxiety remain far distant, and the peace we desire be restored to us all. Farewell.

235 To F. JACOBI

*In camp at Marienborn, nr.
Mainz, 7th June 1793.*

Your welcome letter bids me good-morning here, just as I am getting up from my bed of straw, with the most friendly of suns shining in at my tent. I am replying at once, wishing you all well at Pempelfort in this lovely late spring, while we are stumbling about among vines trodden down and corn cut before it is ripe, expecting news every hour of the death of friends and acquaintances, and living from day to day without any further prospect. The weather is very good, the days hot and the nights heavenly. No doubt, you'll be having it like that too, and blessed peace besides; a good spirit preserve it for you and restore it here!

I am very glad indeed you like my 'Bürger-general'. Practised hand though I am, I can't always judge my own work; and this was a specially perilous undertaking. . .

236 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Marienborn,
3rd July 1793.*

You are a very good child to write so often; and you shall have a letter by return. The weather here the last fortnight has been just as bad as it can have been with you. First frost killed the vines, then came cold, rain and gales, and we had a great deal to put up with in our tents. Now it's all the finer and not at all hot. The nights are particularly pleasant. If only there wasn't the sad spectacle of a nightly bombardment; Mainz is gradually being burnt down before our eyes. Churches, towers, whole streets and quarters of the town go up in flames, one after the other. When I tell you about it later, you'll scarcely believe such a thing could happen.

Don't distress yourself about our cucumbers; see to everything nicely, you give me so much pleasure by that. We'll hold together, for we couldn't have anything better. Love me always as I love you. My Mother has sent you an answer, you'll have been happy to get it. She thinks very kindly of you. If there's no thread in the

parcel, I must have forgotten to put it in, and it may be at home still with the iron and some other things.

I've written to Councillor Voigt about the small house. I can't send the wine while the weather is so hot. Remember me meanwhile to the building-surveyor and tell him he shall have a keg. Ask him to have a word or two with the gardener so that things get on.

Take very good care of yourself, for the child's sake too; kiss our little boy and love me always.

237 To F. JACOBI

*In camp at Marienborn nr.
Mainz, 7th July 1793.*

I have already written to you twice from camp, on the 5th and the 7th June, and so far, to my great regret, I have had no answer. There is a merry and a sad side to our life here; it is positively a play in the grand style, in which in my own way I play Jacques (see Shakespeare's 'As You Like It'). Beautiful women and jugs of wine in the foreground and flames behind them—just like the pictures of Lot and his daughters.

Here's my 'Bürger-general'. I hear it is going well. I am glad I wasn't mistaken. I am hard at work in *aestheticis*, *moralibus* and *physicis* and would be so in *historicis* too, if that were not the most thankless and dangerous of subjects. Farewell. Greetings to the family and love me.

238 To F. JACOBI

*Mainz,
27th July 1793.*

You will be getting by the post a parcel with my essay on physics, finished off during the siege. I dislike writing down anything of what I see and hear, or I could have written a wonderful diary. I shall want to tell you some day about the capitulation, the surrender, the departure of the French—these last days have been among the most interesting of my whole life. The Clubists had been omitted from the 'Capitulation'; yet no steps had been taken to detain them and many got away in the first day of the exodus. The inn-keeper Rüffel rode beside Merlin. Both were in hussar's uniform, they rode at the head of the cavalry, led out of the city by Du Bayet. At the toll-house the crowd was shouting its 'crucify him'; they would have dragged him from his horse but for the presence of mind of

Du Bayet and Merlin and the Prussian officers. The crowd then watched for others not so well escorted, and they caught and robbed and beat them and took them to Marienborn. Among these were Metternich and the priest of Holy Cross. It was the emigrants from Mainz, who weren't allowed back into the town that day, who did all this.

That same evening, however, the citizens sent a list of those preparing to leave the next morning with the second detachment of the French, and demanded their arrest. This was then carried out by a regiment, and they were dragged from the ranks, the French offering no resistance. The mob then began running about the streets and seizing those who were still left. Steps had to be taken to arrest looters too. I approve of the way in which things seemed left to chance, the taking into custody organised from below. These men had done a great deal of harm; it's only the way of the world that they are left in the lurch now by the French, and it may serve as a lesson to agitators. [The Club-president, Professor] Hoffmann, and some others have got away. Things are fairly quiet now, except for the ceaseless squabbling among the men from Prussia, Saxony, Hesse-Darmstadt, and with the French wounded who remain here. They have taken a vast amount of baggage with them. Farewell. I can't write any more, I can barely hold my pen.

239 To A. J. G. K. BATSCH*

Weimar,
26th February 1794.

Dear Sir, I enclose several copies of papers; you will be glad to see from them how far our wishes have been met through his Highness's special favour. Let us look on [the Botanical Institute] as a herald of peace and enjoy it to the full . . .

During these last days I have been able to read carefully only a few chapters of your botanical essay, but I have done so with particular pleasure. Your descriptions are precise and clear and at the same time elegant and attractive. And the great variety in the treatment makes the work very charming. But may I make one observation?

In the First Part and again now I should have liked to see the whole course of the metamorphosis developed for several plants with all your clarity and charm of exposition. The occasional use you make

* Professor of Natural History in Jena.

of this idea shows me that you consider it based on nature itself, and it seems to me that the attention of those interested might be drawn to it . . .

I was very pleased to note that you reject Sprengel's conception, though with becoming mildness. In my opinion it affords no explanation at all. It only ascribes human reasoning to nature and supposes that this greatest mother produces living creatures in the same way as we manufacture muskets, cast bullets and make gunpowder with a view to firing a shot. It seems to me that this conception, and others like it, lead us away from the true path of physiology. For how can we distinguish and understand the parts of any organism and its actions if we do not observe it as a whole existing on its own and for its own sake? . . .

240 To J. G. FICHTE*

Weimar,
24th June 1794.

Very many thanks for the first proofs of your *Theory of Science*. They seem already to fulfil the hopes the introduction had given me.

What you have sent contains nothing that I do not understand, or think I understand, nothing that does not easily fit in with my usual way of thinking.

You are giving scientific confirmation of something which nature seems in her own mysterious way to have decided long ago. I am convinced that you will thereby do mankind an inestimable service, for which all who think and feel owe you a debt. As for me, I shall remain deeply grateful to you if you can at last reconcile me with the philosophers; for I could never do without them nor agree with them.

I am eagerly awaiting the further continuation of your work so as to correct and confirm some of my ideas, and I hope as soon as you are more free of pressing work, to be able to discuss a number of subjects with you; I am postponing their consideration until I see clearly, how what I still venture to think that I can achieve fits in with what we have to hope for from you.

As I shall be delighted to contribute to the journal you intend to bring out with the help of your worthy friends,† this too will be a

* Who had just come to Jena as Professor of Philosophy.

† Among others: Schiller and Wilhelm von Humboldt; Goethe had already accepted Schiller's invitation to collaborate.

means of interchanging ideas, and I have great hopes of this closer intercourse.

My sincere greetings to you.

241 To Frau CHARLOTTE VON KALB

Weimar,
28th June 1794.

Dear friend, here comes Reinecke Fuchs, the rogue, expecting to be well received. Nowadays rogues are honoured and indispensable at courts and particularly in republics, so nothing could be more suitable than really getting to know one of their ancestors.

I am not sending any of Fichte's philosophical writings. If you want to take due note of what he writes, you will have to have it explained in a lecture. It is very pleasant and often helpful to me to have him so near. He is easy to talk with, and as he promises to reconcile common-sense with philosophy, we can't be too attentive to what he says.

Farewell now, and don't forget me. Gustel is well, happy and untroubled; let us both hope that this will last all his life.

I must let you know, too, that Schiller has lately been growing more friendly and open in his attitude to us here in Weimar. I am very pleased and I hope great things from our acquaintance. Farewell now; come and see us soon and enjoy whatever we may have or gain.

242 To G. HUFELAND*

24th July 1794.

Dear Sir, I return herewith the paper you lent me, with many thanks.

People are all running about with bellows, but it seems to me this is rather the moment for buckets of water.

And yet, one can't deny a certain merit to the writer of these 'Observations'. My sincere regards.

* Professor of Jurisprudence in Jena, who had sent Goethe an article with revolutionary ideas by an anonymous author.



Friedrich Schiller

1794-1798

Sie nehmen die ganze Natur zusammen, um über das Einzelne Licht zu bekommen; in der Allheit ihrer Erscheinungsarten suchen Sie den Erklärungsgrund für das Individuum auf. Von der einfachen Organisation steigen Sie, Schritt vor Schritt, zu der mehr verwickelten hinauf, um endlich die verwickeltste von allen, den Menschen, genetisch aus den Materialien des ganzen Naturgebäudes zu erbauen. Dadurch, dass Sie ihn der Natur gleichsam nacherschaffen, suchen Sie in seine verborgene Technik einzudringen. Eine grosse und wahrhaft heldenmässige Idee, die zur Genüge zeigt, wie sehr Ihr Geist das reiche Ganze seiner Vorstellungen in einer schönen Einheit zusammenhält. Sie können niemals gehofft haben, dass Ihr Leben zu einem solchen Ziele zureichen werde, aber einen solchen Weg auch nur einzuschlagen, ist mehr wert, als jeden andern zu endigen,—und Sie haben gewählt, wie Achill in der Ilias, zwischen Phthia und der Unsterblichkeit.

Schiller an Goethe
Jena, 23. August 1794

You take nature as a whole, in order to gain insight into its parts; in the totality of its manifestations you seek the cause that explains the individual. You mount step by step from the simple to the more complex organism; the most complex of all, man, you in the end build up genetically from the materials of the whole edifice of nature. By re-creating him, as it were, in the same way as nature you seek to penetrate to the hidden organisation of his being. It is a great, a truly heroic idea, and one that amply shows how your mind holds in one beautiful unity the whole rich variety of its images. You can never have hoped that your life would suffice for such an aim, but even to have started on a course like this, is worth more than ending any other,—and like Achilles in the Iliad, you have chosen between Phthia and immortality.

Schiller to Goethe
Jena, 23rd August 1794

SYMPATHY with the French Revolution estranged several of his acquaintances from Goethe but he now found ample compensation in his growing friendship with Schiller. During the summer of 1794 Goethe spent some time in Jena where Schiller was living, and once when they both happened to be at a meeting of the Botanical Society they left together at the end of the lecture. An eager discussion of speculative and intuitive methods applied to science tempted Goethe when they reached Schiller's house, to enter. To make his views clearer he expounded his theory of the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*, and although this plainly revealed the contrast between Goethe's intuitive and Schiller's speculative way of thinking, it prepared the way for a better mutual understanding. At the end of July Goethe went on a short visit to Dessau with the Duke. On his return he received a letter from Schiller referring to their recent conversation. Schiller summed up the impression he had gained which, he said, confirmed the picture he had previously formed from Goethe's writings. He then went on to show how Goethe's way of thinking and working appeared to him and how it compared with his own. This letter began their lasting friendship.

Goethe from then on went frequently to Jena, partly on University business, partly because he found there more leisure for his literary and scientific work than in Weimar, but he was mainly attracted by the stimulating company of Schiller and the other interesting men who lived there at that time, either as teachers at the University or as visitors. There was J. G. Fichte, Professor of Philosophy, whose *Wissenschaftslehre* published 1794 much influenced the German Romantic School; his *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808) stimulated the patriotic feeling in Germany which resulted in the rising against Napoleon in 1813. He had to leave the University in 1798 on a charge of atheism. His successor was F. W. J. Schelling, on whose theories the Romantic School based its philosophy. Friedrich Hegel came three years later and taught in Jena until 1806; his works which so greatly influenced all philosophical thinking of the 19th century were written after he had left Jena, but his importance began to be felt already while he was there. Another interesting personality was Wilhelm von Humboldt, later Prussian ambassador in Rome, member of the Congresses of Vienna and of Paris, Minister of Education, translator of Pindar's *Odes* and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and author of an essay on Goethe's *Herrmann und Dorothea* and of a book on Spain and the Basque language. His brother Alexander, the naturalist, who explored South America and by his writings put the sciences of physical geography and meteorology on a new basis, was also often in Jena. This literary and scientific circle was

joined for longer or shorter periods by J. H. Voss, translator of Homer and author of the epic *Louise*; the brothers Schlegel—August Wilhelm, translator of Shakespeare, and Friedrich, who wrote himself several though not very successful plays, but who was important as author of studies on Indian and Greek literature—and F. A. Wolf, philologist and critic. An interesting visitor was Mme de Staël, daughter of Louis XVI's Minister of Finance, Necker, and author of *De l'Allemagne* (1803) and *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807); in the former work she wrote at length on Goethe, Schiller, Wieland and other German authors, in *Corinne* she again spoke of Goethe but mentioned no other German writer.

While life in this intellectually congenial circle did much to relieve the loneliness from which Goethe suffered after his return from Italy, this improvement was furthered by Goethe's renewed relationship, though on a different footing, with Frau von Stein. Weimar society was so small that it had been impossible for them to avoid each other. Goethe's position had been made still more difficult by the resentment felt in Court circles because, though he did not go through formal marriage with her, he treated Christiane Vulpius, a girl socially so much his inferior, almost as his wife, recognising and bringing up their child as his son. Nothing would induce Goethe to break faith with this girl who had trusted him and whom he genuinely loved. But he was glad when an opportunity offered to make his relations with Frau von Stein more tolerable. Her son Fritz wished in 1796 to transfer from government service in Weimar to Prussia and asked his mother if Goethe would use his influence to gain the necessary permission from the Duke (Carl August gave it reluctantly when Goethe supported Fritz von Stein's request). About this time too Schiller's young son, whose mother was a friend of Frau von Stein, took his six year old playmate August Goethe to her; she quickly grew to love the child and mentioned this in a letter to Goethe. In the following year he introduced his wife and child to his mother, taking them with him as far as Frankfort on a journey to Switzerland where he went to visit his friend Heinrich Meyer the artist. Goethe's mother at once became very fond of Christiane and the child.

These happy changes in Goethe's life, a holiday at Carlsbad in 1795 and the journey to Switzerland, all helped to revive Goethe's poetic inspiration. He resumed work on *Faust*, finished *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, wrote the *Märchen*, the *Briefe aus der Schweiz*, the epic poem *Alexis und Dora*, a large number of lyrics and ballads, mainly for Schiller's *Musenalmanach*, translated the autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, and wrote with an ease which seemed to Schiller quite stupendous the epos *Herrmann und Dorothea*. Some literary critical essays, e.g. *Über epische und dramatische Dichtung* and some of his scientific work also belong to this period. In 1797 he and Schiller published together in the *Musenalmanach* a large collection of satirical distichs, called in imitation of Martial, *Xenien*, which were directed against the prevalent bad taste

in literature and philosophy. With regard to science, Goethe's interest centred at this time mainly on the theory of colour. The management of the theatre and official duties, like the supervision of the building of the new ducal palace in Weimar and irrigation works near Jena also made demands on his time. The political situation too was frequently disturbing, as the Napoleonic wars unsettled the whole of Europe, especially threatening the West of Germany where Goethe's mother and many of his friends lived. Notwithstanding all this Goethe's poetry reached at this time a new height—as he himself said, he had become a poet once more.

Ettersburg,
27th August 1794.

Your letter is the most welcome present I could have had for my birthday which falls this week. Your friendly hand seems to sum up myself and my work, and your sympathetic interest encourages me to make a more diligent and lively use of my powers.

Genuine pleasure and real usefulness must be mutual, and I shall be glad to show you some day more fully what your conversation has meant to me, and how I too date an epoch in my life from those days. I shall tell you how content I am to have pursued my own way, though without particular encouragement, because now after our unexpected meeting we seem destined to go on together. I have always appreciated the sincere and rare seriousness apparent in everything you have written or done, and I now feel encouraged to ask you to tell me yourself how your mind has been developing, especially during these last few years. We shall be able to work all the more uninterruptedly together once we have made clear to each other the point we have reached at present.

I shall be glad to tell you of everything about me or in my mind. I am most vividly conscious that what I have undertaken to do far exceeds any human powers and their duration on earth. So I am anxious to entrust many things to you to preserve them and even to give new life to them.

You will soon see how much I have to gain from your sympathy. A closer acquaintance will reveal to you a certain obscurity and hesitation in me, which I cannot master, though I am plainly conscious of them. But traits like these are frequent in many of us, yet we tend to allow our nature to rule us unless it grows all too despotic.

I hope to spend some time with you soon and then we shall discuss a number of things at length.

Unfortunately I gave Unger my novel* a few weeks before your invitation came, and the first printed sheets are already here. I have often thought of late that it would have been most suitable for the periodical; it is the only thing that would have some bulk and it is the kind of problematic composition our good Germans like.

I am sending the first book as soon as the proofs are all here. It is so long since I wrote it that I can really be called only the editor now.

If any of my other ideas were usable for that same purpose, we

* *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre.*

could easily agree on the most suitable form and it would not take us long to give it shape.

My greetings to you; and remember me in your circle.

244 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
4th September 1794.*

I read the manuscripts you sent me with great pleasure, also the fragment on the 'Sublime'. They showed me again that not only do the same things interest us, but that we usually look at them in the same way. I notice that we agree on every important matter, and as to our points of view, composition, and expression, any difference in these shows the richness of the objects and the like variety in the subjects. I should wish to ask you to let me have by degrees everything you have written and published on this, so as to make up now for lost time.

That brings me to a suggestion I have to make. The Court goes to Eisenach next week, so for a fortnight I shall be alone and freer than I expect to be for some time. Would you consider coming here to be my guest during that time? You would be at perfect liberty to work as you like. We should have times of conversation when it suited us, see those friends who are most likely to think as we do, and the visit would benefit both of us. You would live just as you choose, as far as possible just as you do at home. I should be able to show you what is of most importance in my collections, and we should find many interests growing up between us. From the 14th onwards I shall be ready and free to receive you.

I am saving up many things to say till then and in the meantime I send greetings.

Have you seen Ramdohr's 'Charis'? I've tried with every natural and artificial organ of my being to grasp the book, but there is not one page of it I have been able to make my own.

Farewell, and give my kind greetings to your family circle.

245 To SCHILLER *

26th October 1794.

It has been a great pleasure to me to read the manuscript you sent. I drained it at one draught. A delicious drink, suited to our

* Who had sent Goethe the manuscript of his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*.

constitution, slips easily down our throat; even on our tongue it has a wholesome effect by tuning our nerves aright. That was just how these 'Letters' delighted and pleased me. Could it be otherwise, seeing I found there such a noble and consistent rendering of what I had long recognised as right, partly lived and partly wanted to live? Meyer too took great pleasure in them and his sincere and sure judgement confirmed mine. In this comfortable situation Herder's enclosed note might almost have disturbed me, accusing us of one-sidedness as we take pleasure in this way of thinking. But one should not be so sensitive in this world, and it is comforting enough to err in the company of men of proven worth, especially if this matter helps rather than harms oneself and others. Let us go on living and working with confidence and firmness, thinking of all we are and do as one whole, so as more or less to round off our imperfect work. I am keeping the 'Letters' a few days more to enjoy them again with Meyer.

I am sending you the 'Elegies'. I would ask you not to let them out of your hands, but to read them to those who have still to judge of their admissibility. I should then like to have them back, as I might put a few more touches to them. If you want to make any remarks, please add a note.

A copy of the 'Epistle' is being made and will follow soon with a few trifles. After that I must make a pause, for the third book of my novel is claiming my attention. I have not yet had the proofs of the first book; you shall have them as soon as they come.

About the 'Almanach', I would suggest inserting or adding a little book of epigrams. Singly they have no importance; but I am sure that out of several hundreds of them, some not publishable, we could pick out a number that refer to one another and form a whole. The next time we meet you shall see this whole frivolous brood in its nest.

My greetings to you, and remember me among yourselves.

246 To SCHILLER

*Carlsbad,
8th July 1795.*

I am taking this opportunity of sending you a letter by Fräulein von Göchhausen. I arrived here safely on the evening of the 4th, over tolerable and over bad roads. Till to-day the weather has been extremely poor and the first sunshine this morning does not seem

to be lasting. The company here is both large and good; there are the usual complaints that they don't suit one another and each keeps to his own way of life. I have done nothing but look and talk; whatever else is going to be and to grow remains to be seen. In any case I've embarked on an impromptu little romance, most useful for luring one out of bed at five o'clock in the morning. I hope to tone down the sentiments and direct the action so as to enable it to last just a fortnight.

I must say I am very well received here as a famous author, though there *have* been some mortifying incidents. For instance a most charming little woman told me that she had read my latest works with the greatest pleasure, 'Giaffar the Barmecide' in particular had interested her enormously. You can imagine my wrapping myself with the utmost modesty in the Arabian costume left by friend Klinger, and so appearing in the most favourable light in the eyes of my fair flatterer. And I have no cause to fear that she will be abruptly disenchanted during these next three weeks.

I am gradually making the acquaintance of many people here, some of them most interesting, and I shall have a good deal to tell you.

On my way here I was pondering on some old fairy-tales and various thoughts about their treatment passed through my mind. I mean to write one as soon as possible so that we shall have a text before us. My greetings to you and yours and do remember me.

247 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Carlsbad,
19th July 1795.*

I've been here a fortnight now, and how I long to be at home again! The cure is working well, though the weather is simply dreadful. Life here is full of distractions, I spend the whole day with other people; there are pretty smiles and glances enough, but that does you no harm, for I see all the better what cause I have to love and keep my faithful treasure.

I must give up any hope of working and of what I had planned to do here; I'm bringing back the papers just as I took them. But I'll be all the busier when I am back with you in August. Good-bye. I'm looking forward to you, to our little boy, to the house and our life in it. Here's something enclosed, so that the letter doesn't go quite empty. Good-bye, love me.

Weimar,
24th August 1795.

The gardener Diezel can hardly be said to have recommended himself to the Ducal Commission. The glasshouse was found at the end of June to be shockingly dirty; he has neglected to put the flowerpots on the saucers he has had since the middle of May; he has thereby done harm to the house itself; and when he was given a well-merited rebuke, he at once requested to be released forthwith. But as you, Sir, are satisfied with him on the whole, and as I hope in future he will obey specific regulations and orders better, he is after all to be retained for the present.

But you must be aware, Sir, that there can be no word or even question of advancement; this could be granted by the Ducal Commission only if he were to show himself more worthy. If, therefore, the gardener Diezel should give satisfaction until next Easter, carrying out his duties in tending the garden without complaint, then the Ducal Commission might recognise his efforts by improving his position. But even in that case I must beg you, Sir, to maintain a strict supervision to see that the glasshouse, which is the chief ornament of our newly laid out garden, is kept clean, that all the pots are provided with saucers and that anything is avoided that might hasten the rotting of the beams and pegs which have already been injured quite enough. I hope that at my next visit I shall find everything as far as possible in order.

My sincere greetings to you.

Ilmenau,
29th August 1795.

We're not coming back as you expect, my dear. There's so much to do here that I shall have to stay another week, I find. I'm keeping our little boy with me; you can't think how good he has been. He's seen a good deal already, the mine-shaft, the stamp-mill, the porcelain works, the glass works, the mill where the childrens' marbles are ground. At each place he took something away with him, and he talks really delightfully about these things. And he speaks to everybody, and everybody knows him now. He sends you this white honey-cake, though he'd have liked to eat it himself. Remember me to Herr Meyer and tell him to go on drinking the

* In charge of the Botanical Garden in Jena.

waters. If anything has come for me, send it on by Vent who is riding out here on Tuesday. Gustel sends his best love. He is sitting on the sofa just now. I've undressed him, and we're the greatest friends. Good-bye; love us both always.

250 To SCHILLER

Ilmenau,
29th August 1795.

From sociable and idle Carlsbad I could not have come to a more contrasted way of life than in solitary and active Ilmenau. The few days here have passed very quickly and I shall have to stay a week yet if I am to see my way in the business here as I would wish. I have always liked being here and I still do. I believe it comes from the harmony of everything—countryside, people, climate and life here. There is a quiet, steady economic effort, everywhere the transition from hand-craft to machinery; and, in spite of its seclusion, more intercourse with the world outside than in many a small town in the low-lying accessible districts. So far I haven't had a single idea out of keeping with this place, but it was very necessary for me to do what I had set myself before the winter. My greetings to you in such different regions; and remember me among yourselves.

251 To Frau CAROLINE HERDER

Weimar,
30th October 1795.

I am writing this myself, and sparing good Knebel the unpleasantness of taking part in a matter in which he is as unable as I am to advise and help. I have no wish to influence your opinion, I only want to make mine clear to you. It might be inadvisable to speak with you in these moments of acute feelings; neither of us would convince the other. As you have already written what I ought not to have had to read, I might expect to hear what I should not have to hear.

(1) In the contract the Duke promised to be responsible for the expense of your children's studies and for their accommodation.

(2) Outside the contract, the Ducal family aided the children with certain specific contributions while they still lived at home.

(3) It was your duty to inform the Duke when Gottfried went to the University and to request that a sum might be fixed and paid

termly. The Duke could then have said what he meant to do and could have reduced this outlay for himself by scholarships, etc.

(4) This was not done, nor was the Duke approached about the other children, though he had promised *to be responsible for them in future*.

(5) On the contrary, you sent August to Switzerland; this step may have been good and necessary in itself, but it was by no means universally approved.

(6) Now, after the lapse of some years, you suddenly demand from the Duke a sum not specified but apparently considerable, to cover your expenses in keeping your children away from home, and you assert that the Duke is bound to make good your full deficit.

(7) . . .

(8) . . .

(9) Without discussing the past, the Duke makes you a new offer, to pay the expense of Gottfried's graduation and to let August and Adalbert enter his service. My view is that you would have done well to accept this offer confidently; for the money for the graduation had to come from somewhere. And it would do August no harm to work for a while in an Office; it is useful to any man of business, and in the Electorate of Saxony all the mining officials have to have finished a *Cursus iuris*. Adalbert, of whom you say nothing, had in Eisenach the best possible chance to learn and to prove himself; and the practice of placing young lads who had the good fortune to be near the Duke and to distinguish themselves, offered excellent prospects to both of the children.

(10) . . .

(11) Instead of accepting, you brush this considerable offer hastily aside, with an indifference bordering on contempt; you at once sent August to the University to pursue under the title of mineralogy and natural philosophy a trifling occupation he took up among the mountains of Switzerland. You practically say: We don't want your advice or help, your prospects or posts, we know what we mean to do and we shall do it, we simply want your money. You insult the Duke and the Duchess, you send me word of your over-hasty actions, and amid reproaches and threats order me to act in your and your children's interest, at the very moment when you rob me of the possibility of doing so.

(12) You may realise, if only for a moment, how I must look upon your violent, passionate outbursts, your obsession that you are perfectly right, your notion that nobody else has any conception of

honour or conscience. You may hate me as much as any stage villain, but let me make myself plain, and don't imagine I shall be converted in the fifth act.

(13) . . .

That is what I think and will go on thinking unless some miracle or illness alters all my senses. I can read from your letters what you think, and it is not my aim to influence you. I am not prepared to read any reply to this letter or say another word about the past.

Let me know through Knebel if you can approach the Duke about provision and posts for your children, if you have reasonable suggestions with reference to the future and the past. I know quite well that when one is asked for what can not be done, one gets no thanks for what can. But that will not keep me from doing whatever I can do for you and yours.

252 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
1st November 1795.

It is a frail little boy, not a sweet little girl that has at last arrived, and one of my cares is lying in the cradle. This means it is now up to you to provide a little girl for a marriage and to increase the family of poets. I shall be coming to see you soon and really do need the sort of conversation I can have with you; I have a great deal to tell you. I am still not treading the ways of poetry. Circumstances have led me to study architecture again, and what I have put together in this connection will help towards forming a definite opinion on works of this kind.

I have had a letter from Meyer, written from Munich, with interesting news of the place, and one from Nuremberg. I shall bring them. Let me know how you are, and remember me.

253 To Frau CHARLOTTE VON KALB*

Weimar, about
18th November 1795.

Thanks for your friendly note. In situations like this one, loving sympathy hastens the good effect that otherwise we can hope from time alone.

I should like to know what you think of my newest writings. I

* Who had sent a letter of condolence when the little boy died two weeks old.

am specially keen to hear what explanation you have to give to my 'Märchen'.

Farewell; I hope to see you soon.

254 To WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT *Weimar,*
3rd December 1795.

It is high time you heard from me; but I must begin, alas, with the complaint that our last winter's quartet [in Jena] is broken up. You are in Berlin, Meyer, I suppose, in Rome, the bad weather and several trifling matters here have prevented me from visiting Schiller more often. My correspondence isn't very lively, and here I am in my own rather narrow circle once more.

The Friday Society has started again, so the light of knowledge, which otherwise is more or less under a bushel, shines out at least once a week in my house.

I thought I would draw up a scheme of the many branches of activity in our little circle, and I'll try to induce the others to fill in the details. This republic of art and science is rather a motley affair; like the constitution of the Holy Roman Empire its parts have been assembled but not knit together, as you yourself know only too well.

You have seen most of what I have been doing all this time and you will soon be seeing what I am busy on at present. Schiller tells me you quite liked my 'Märchen', and I am very pleased you did, for as you know one mustn't listen too much to the German public's opinion, if one is to keep courage to write.

I don't expect the last part of my ['Wilhelm Meister'] to be out till Michaelmas and I want to arrange my papers on natural history and natural philosophy before I plunge back into the Italian ones, though I have been reading and collecting a good deal already for them.

Do write and tell me what you have been doing meanwhile, and give me news of your brother; I am longing to see his notes on his travels . . .

I am sure you have been interested to note Schiller's progress as a critic. He has some very happy ideas; they will be accepted some day, now they are put into words, however much resistance they meet with at first. I fear he will begin by being hotly opposed, and then, in a few years' time be quoted without acknowledgement . . .

Weimar,
23rd December 1795.

I am longing for the new year to begin, and I am trying to finish up a number of small affairs so as to be free for a longer visit to you again. I hope I may find you well and in poetic vein, for that is surely the best state that God has granted to man. My novel will know no rest now till it is complete, which makes me very happy, for in the midst of every distraction it goes steadily on.

I have a great many more things to tell you. For instance I enclose a key to the *dramatis personae* of my 'Märchen' by our friend Charlotte [Kalb]. Do send me back another key quickly to give her.

We must cultivate the idea I had the other day of writing epigrams in distich form, like Martial's 'Xenia', on all periodicals, and we must offer a collection in your 'Musenalmanach' next year. We must make a great many and choose out the best. I enclose a few samples.

I am not quite satisfied at Cotta's refusal to say anything about the subscriptions to the 'Horen'; on every side I hear talk of an increased number of them.

Is this noble Sosias* going to arrive with his gold and silver at Epiphany? We'll excuse him the incense and the myrrh.

The other day I received P. Castel's work 'Optique des couleurs', 1740; this spirited Frenchman delights me. In future I can have whole passages from his work reprinted and show the common herd that the true state of the affair was known to the public in France as early as 1739, but was then, too, suppressed.

Here are some hastily added variants to the key; if you will add to the number, we may hope for endless confusion from these explanations.

The 'Xenia' very soon.

Weimar,
30th December 1795.

I am very glad you approve of and like the 'Xenia'. I entirely agree with you, we must widen our range. How marvellous [Ramdohr's] 'Charis' and [Goeschen's] 'Johann' will look side by side! We must just write these trifles at random and later choose from them carefully. About ourselves, we have to put into verse only what the dull people say about us, and so remain hidden behind the form of irony.

* The name of Horace's publisher.

It seems that the review of the 'Horen' will be a positive marvel, and our rivals are waiting open-mouthed for it; however it turns out, there is sure to be some trouble again.

I remember what Brandis in his work on the 'Vital Force' said about my 'Metamorphosis', but not the passage you quote; he probably mentioned this again in his translation of Darwin's 'Zoonomy', since Darwin too had the misfortune to be already known as a poet (in the English sense of the word).

Only the great scarcity of tragedies led me to hope any good at all from [Woltmann's]. Yesterday another wretched play was performed, Ziegler's 'Barbarity and Greatness', and they fought so barbarously that one of the actors almost lost his nose. What is the title of the adaptation of the 'Adelphi'?* I remember it from long ago.

I do long to see you again and work [in Jena] in the quiet castle. This last month my life has been a real medley of a hundred different kinds of business and a hundred different kinds of idleness, while my novel is now like a stocking, dirty with slow knitting. However, it grows over-ripe in my mind and that is all for the best.

I have had a letter from Meyer from Rome; he has arrived safely and now he is sitting there in the reeds; but he complains bitterly of the others sitting there too, cutting their reed-pipes and filling his ears with their piping. Germany can't escape from itself, even if it runs away to Rome, it always takes its commonplaces with it like the Englishman his teakettle. Meyer hopes to send soon something of his and Hirt's for the 'Horen'.

I enclose a letter from Oberreit, a real oddity again in its own way. I must see if I can beg something from our Court for the poor old man.

My sincere greetings and do remember me.

257 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
23rd January 1796.*

I shall be leading a very gay life this week. To-day the Ducal Family from Darmstadt is arriving, to-morrow there is a court, dinner, concert, supper and masked ball. Monday 'Don Giovanni'; for the rest of the week there will be rehearsals, as Iffland's 'Advocates' is fixed for the 30th and the new opera for the 2nd. After that, however, I shall try to collect myself and see what I can do. I have glimpses of the Eighth Book among all these distractions and it will be finished at the first opportunity now.

* By Terence.

The last epigrams you sent are extremely witty, so I shall have them all copied; later on the unsuitable ones will separate themselves from the rest like foreign bodies.

The wallpapers you ask for and the borders are none of them to be had here. I enclose patterns of both from Frankfort. The paper is one ell wide and there are twenty ells to the piece. So you would need four pieces for your 63 ells and have a good deal over. A year ago a piece cost 1 Gulden 20 Kreuzer. The border I enclose has forty ells to the piece and costs $3\frac{1}{2}$ Gulden, so you would need two pieces of it. It looks well against green; if you want something brighter, there are also nice rose-borders in the same width. If you send me back the patterns at once, I could write to Frankfort on Monday evening and you would have what you want pretty quickly. It would be a more difficult matter to have the papers dyed here, especially as Ekebrecht is occupied at present with the decorations.

My greetings to you; make the most of the fine weather.

258 To HEINRICH MEYER *

Weimar,
8th February 1796.

I am going to reply at once to your kind letter of 8th January, to keep our correspondence going. I am very pleased to hear how you are and that there are almost too many good things—just what was to be expected . . .

Admittedly, we have set ourselves a very considerable and extensive task, my dear friend, and this was a good plan to get a general idea. But I am always for thoroughness over details. It is neither in your nor in my nature to feel any pleasure in a general notion, where every step only shows more clearly that one ought to have begun differently. Work as precisely as you feel you ought, always give a faithful enough reproduction to satisfy yourself, let your own feelings govern your choice, give the necessary time. And always keep in mind that we really only work for ourselves. If what we do pleases or serves someone else, well and good. But the aim of life is life itself, so let your stay in Rome be your aim. It is in this spirit that I make myself ready; and if each of us has done what is needed in ourselves, the outward effect will follow naturally.

I have had Cellini's work on 'Goldsmithing and Sculpture' sent from Göttingen, and I have begun it. There are delightful things in the preface, and in the work itself there are very precise mechan-

* In Rome.

cal directions. There may be a chance some day of comparing the mechanical side of the arts and crafts of to-day with those of that period.

I must tell you one thought that struck me as I read. In the 15th century Italy, like the rest of the world, was still in a state of barbarism. The barbarian can appreciate art only in so far as it can serve him as ornament. That is why at periods like that, goldsmith's work was so advanced, while other arts were backward. And so it was from the goldsmiths' workshops that the first splendid masters of other arts came, given opportunity and encouragement from outside. Donatello, Bruneleschi, Ghiberti, were all goldsmiths to begin with. This might give us some good ideas. And are we not barbarians once more, now all our art is for ornament again?

All this led me back to Cellini's autobiography. It seems impossible to make an abridgment of it, for what does an abridgment of a man's life amount to? What are pragmatic biographical statements compared with the simple details of a great man's life? I am going to try to translate it, but it is harder than one thinks . . .

259 To Mr BECKER and Mme BECK *Weimar,*
16th February 1796.

The actor Becker has undergone detention in the guard-house, the due penalty of his disgraceful conduct during the performance. And now the actress, Mme Beck, is required to forfeit a weekly sum on account of the abusive speech she admits having uttered and which led to this outbreak. The matter will then be at an end as far as the theatre management is concerned.

If Mme Beck wishes to claim any private satisfaction from Herr Becker, she is herewith directed to do so through the usual channels.

260 To C. G. VOIGT *Jena,*
10th May 1796.

It has been a great joy to get the various letters you have so kindly sent me. The mine-reports arrived to-day, and I shall soon let you know more about my ideas on them. To-day I will just touch on some other points.

With things as they are at present, one is grateful to get 15,000 thaler for the building of the palace [in Weimar]. We shall now

be able to make good progress with the well of the staircase and the main walls. Please be kind enough to insist on a weekly statement from the building surveyor, and to impress upon the architect to keep strictly to the main parts and not to undertake any minor details.

I am most anxious to know where our Army contingent has got to and if they have the honour of catching sight of the enemy at last?

We have been busy with the waterworks meanwhile and we have now cut an opening for the 'Mill-Pond'; I hope it will continue to be a success. I should like you to come and see this little piece of work some time after Whitsun. Schiller, too, would be very pleased to see you again.

The Körners and Count Gessler are still here, so we are having a delightful and interesting time. Besides, everything goes on in its peaceful way and discipline amongst the students will not be difficult if we have a good police-force.

A good number of Swiss have arrived here to study Law. They seem polite and well-to-do people.

Farewell. Come as soon as you possibly can, even if only for a short visit. Don't grudge yourself this rest from your busy life, nor us this pleasure. Farewell, meantime.

261 To SCHILLER*

*Weimar,
26th June 1796.*

Here at last is the great work! I can hardly enjoy having got so far with it. One is bound to be weary after so long a road. I have only been able to look through it once; you will have to supplement a certain amount according to my intentions. It must in any case be gone through and copied again.

I should be grateful if you could return the 'Xenia' by this messenger.

In the next ten or twelve days I must make up arrears in all kinds of matters with which I must at least keep in touch; after that I hope to give all my attention to the 'Horen' and the 'Almanach'.

You will see that I had to include Mignon's song after all, to give the right effect, but there may be another that could be added for the 'Almanach'.

My greetings to you; I hope this finds you in really good health.

* With a manuscript copy of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*.

I do not want this book back until I have finished tidying up here.
I hope to hear from you soon.

262 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
7th July 1796.*

Many thanks for your most refreshing letter and for telling me what you feel and think of my novel, especially the Eighth Book. If it is to your liking, you will not fail to recognise your influence on it; I could not have written it, at least not in this way, but for our relation to each other. I thought many a time of the scenes which are now before you, as we talked about theory and examples, and in my own mind I applied our principles to these scenes. And now, too, your friendly warning saves me from some very obvious errors, and some of your remarks have shown me at once how to put things right and I shall make use of this in the next copy.

Even among the affairs and dealings of ordinary life one rarely finds the sympathetic interest one wants and in a lofty aesthetic matter we can hardly hope for it. For how many can see a work of art as such and how many can comprehend it? Sympathy alone can see all that is in it, and greater sympathy yet is needed to see what it lacks. I could say still more about our unique relationship.

I had got as far as this after receiving your first letter, when all kinds of outward and inward obstacles prevented my going on. Besides, I feel even if I were completely calm I could not make any observations in return for yours. What you say has now to take shape in my mind, as a whole as well as in detail, if the Eighth Book is really to hold your sympathetic interest. Go on interpreting my own work to me; in my thoughts I have already been working along the lines of your suggestions. Next Wednesday or so I shall give a rough summary of what I mean to do. I should like to have the manuscript back by Saturday, 16th; Cellini is to call on you that day . . .

263 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
9th July 1796.*

On a separate sheet I am indicating the passages which I intend to alter or add, in accordance with your remarks; and I should like to thank you very heartily for to-day's letter. Its suggestions keep my mind on the completion of the whole work. Please do not

cease what I may call driving me out of my own limits. The fault which you notice comes from my innermost nature, from a certain 'realistic tic' that makes it seem pleasant to me to withdraw my existence, actions and writings from men's eyes. I shall for instance always enjoy travelling incognito or choose a simpler dress rather than a better one. In conversation with strangers or mere acquaintances I prefer a minor topic or at least a less eloquent expression. I like to appear less serious than I am and place myself between what I am and what I appear to be. You know this quite well and some of the reasons too.

After that general confession I am quite ready to go on to this particular one: Had I not been pushed and urged by you, I should have given way to this peculiarity, against my better judgement, in this novel too. And considering the immense trouble I have taken over it, this would have been unpardonable; everything required was so simple to see or so easy to supply . . .

There is no doubt that what in the work I mention as *results* is much more limited than the content of the work; I seem to myself to be someone drawing up a long column of large sums and then adding it up wrongly on purpose, yielding to God knows what whim to reduce the total.

I already owe you the heartiest thanks for so much and now comes your timely and candid mention of this perverse manner; I shall certainly follow your sound suggestion as far as I possibly can. I have only to apply your letter to the appropriate passages, and that will be a great help already. It might of course happen that I cannot get myself to say the last vital words—for man's perversity often builds up insurmountable obstacles. In that case I shall ask you to add with a few bold strokes of your brush what the strangest of my natural limitations prevents me from expressing. Do write down your suggestions and during this week encourage me while I help on 'Cellini' and possibly the 'Almanach' too.

264 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
23rd July 1796.

Here are a few pieces of news.

Saxony is making arrangements for a cordon.

The French have thrown back the Austrians near Gemünden, so they were within five miles of Würzburg. They have probably

reached it by now and find surprising stores and rescued treasures.

Accounts agree that the Saxon contingents are in retreat. The Austrians are drawing back beyond the Danube; Würzburg has to furnish 12,000 horses to get them back there.

Württemberg is making peace and there is an armistice already. Mannheim is said to be as good as lost. The Imperial Court is summoning 30,000 troops from Bohemia and Galicia.

Frankfort has lost 174 houses and is to pay eight Million in Livres, one and a half Million in cloth and other material and a large amount of victuals. In exchange no resident is to suffer amortisation without judgement and sentence.

These seem to be the cheering pieces of news from different places. The fate of our district rests wholly on being able to gain time. We can perhaps withstand a first attack and skirmishing. We can derive some hope—if it is not destroyed, like so many others—from the combination of various factors: the King of Prussia is in Pymont, so that the last resort is at hand; he and the Landgrave of Hesse himself must be most anxious to secure a peace for Saxony; the French are fully occupied pursuing the Austrians to Bohemia by way of Franconia, Swabia and Bavaria and conquering them on their own native soil.

I have still no news of my Mother; she lives in the big square where the main guard is stationed, looking straight up the *Zeil*; so she had a view of the whole semicircle of the town which was bombarded.

Meanwhile I have gone on rolling my tub. As the copying of my novel proceeds I have tried to attend to the various *desiderata*; you shall judge what success I have had.

My greetings to you. The news about the Coadjutor is unlikely, he had plenty of space and time to retreat to Ulm; even Condé's corps which was in Freiburg seems to have escaped. You shall hear anything further I get to know.

265 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
6th August 1796.

The *ci-devant* Xenia look very well in their present grouping and this serious-minded company is sure to be given a good reception. It would be a very good thing if you could add the few titles

which are still missing. My mind has not produced anything in these short hours. I shall be with you next week, and I hope our being together will not fail to bear some fruit; we shall finish a number of things and make a number of decisions. I have some good things in the scientific field to tell you about.

In the last few days I have discovered the most beautiful phenomenon I know in the realm of organic nature—and that is saying a good deal—; I am telling you about it at once. I don't know if it is commonly known; if it is, then the naturalists are much to blame for not continually telling us of an important phenomenon like this; instead they plague us with so many dull details when we are eager to learn. Do not tell anyone about it. It is true I have made the observation in the case of one species [of butterfly] only, but no doubt the same applies to all, and I shall see this in the autumn. The change takes place so quickly, besides one can't really observe the movement because of the restricted space, so that it seems like a fairy tale to watch the creatures. For it means a good deal in twelve minutes to grow half an inch in length and proportionately in width, it is almost increasing by the square. And all four wings at once! I will try to let you see this phenomenon. My sincere greetings. Let me tell you, I hope to bring you peace for Thuringia and Upper-Saxony.*

P.S. Of course one must not imagine the solid parts of the wings to show increase in so short a time; but I expect that the wings made of the finest *tela cellulosa* are already quite complete and that they expand at this speed through the permeation of some kind of elastic fluid whether like air, vapour or moisture. I am convinced that the same might be observed in the development of flowers.

266 To Frau VON STEIN

Jena,
7th September 1796.

I am sending you this, my dear friend, with a note to show (if you like) to the Duchess. As you will see I have changed my mind about the post,† and that makes my suggestion more precise. But I do not think it will lead to anything; the Duke has a natural and considered aversion to projects like this. Meanwhile, however, it

* The Austrian Army under Archduke Charles had driven the French under Moreau back over the Rhine.

† Which Goethe would suggest to the Duke to offer to Fritz von Stein, should a suitable one become vacant.

would bring the matter under discussion and at least one would be making some suggestion as an alternative [to the Prussian offer].

A refusal to fix anything is sure to follow, the *Assessor* will enter the Prussian service and the matter will be at an end after a little minor unpleasantness.

To my mind Fritz is quite justified. If you really want to live and feel a definite urge to be active and take a larger view of things, you are bound to recoil from a petty post as from the grave . . .

All good wishes be with you; allow me to speak further with you about this on my return. And allow my poor boy to go on enjoying your presence, and let the sight of you form his mind. I cannot think without emotion of your fondness for him.

267 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Jena,
9th September 1796.*

My dear child, I can't say if I'll be coming in the next few days. It all depends if I can feel the wish to start something new. If so, I'll stay here. I mean ['Herrmann und Dorothea'] that great Idyll, you know about it. I'd be overjoyed if I could get it written this month.

In any case, send some warm stockings; it's beginning to be very cold in the mornings already.

I am putting in the little key of my writing desk; in the right-hand cupboard you'll find printed sheets of the Seventh Book [of 'Wilhelm Meister']. Tell me how you are getting on. Love to our little boy, and don't forget to love me.

268 To C. G. VOIGT

*Jena,
30th September 1796.*

. . . I shall probably stay here some time, for I have not the heart to leave our good Schiller in his present state. His father has recently died and the youngest boy seems likely to follow him shortly. Schiller bears all this without complaint, but it makes his physical sufferings more acute still and, I very much fear, will weaken him dreadfully. It is all the worse because as usual one can't get him out of the house, so that he loses touch with everyone and few people come to see him. I am telling you this in confidence, for I don't care to talk of it. Perhaps you could mention to his Highness this reason for my prolonged absence . . .

Weimar,
5th December 1796.

Some very fine ice for skating and this splendid weather have kept me from writing these last few days; I am writing you a few words now after a very happy day.

Mme de Staël's work, which Herr von Humboldt will have mentioned to you, will reach you in a few days. It is extremely interesting to see how such a very enthusiastic character passes through the fierce refining fire of a revolution which affected her so greatly. One might almost say that only the intellectual being in her remains. It might be possible to select some important passages from her book and use them for the 'Horen' or to take one single chapter; but it must be done soon, for by Easter the translation is sure to be out. I leave this to you . . .

Weimar,
26th December 1796.

The enthusiastic gardener usually likes to send his friends some of the choice fruits of the little domain that he has tended with care. It is not that he thinks them delicious; he just wants to show that all the time he has been tending them he has been thinking of those he loves.

It is in that spirit that I send you my finished novel, a book I would not send to a museum to lie there beside works of classical authors, unless I were sure of some indulgence and favour.

I may perhaps venture to send you soon the announcement of an epic poem, mentioning how much I owe to the theory you so impressed upon me. I have long wanted to try to write an epic, but the lofty conception of the unity and indivisibility of Homer's work always deterred me. But now that you ascribe these magnificent works to a 'family' I feel it is less bold to venture among many and tread the way that Voss in his 'Luise' so beautifully showed us.

Though I am unable to write any theoretical appreciation of your work, I hope you will not be dissatisfied with this practical approval . . .

* After reading Mme de Staël's *De l'influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations*.

† A classical philologist, to whom he sent a copy of *Wilhelm Meister*. Wolf in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* had tried to prove that the poems ascribed to Homer were the work of several authors; Goethe, who never liked this idea, later rejected it.

Weimar,
18th January 1797.

The few hours I recently spent with you have given me a great longing once more for a stretch of time such as we two used to have; as soon as I have more or less finished off various things here and arranged a number of others, I shall spend some time with you again, and hope it will be fruitful for us both in more ways than one. Do make use of your best hours to press on with your tragedy, so that we can begin to discuss it together.

I have just received your kind letter, and I do not deny that this wonderful [poetic] epoch which is beginning for me seems to me strangely remarkable; unfortunately I am not yet quite at ease about it, for I am still carrying along with me from my 'analytic' period a great deal I cannot get rid of and can hardly work out. In the meantime nothing remains for me but to guide my bark on this stream as well as I can. The last fortnight has already shown me what effect a journey can have in this state of mind; but nothing distant and nothing whole can be foreseen, for this regulated natural force is just like any unregulated one: it cannot be guided by anything at all, it too must grow of itself and act through itself and in its own way. This phenomenon will lead us to a number of observations.

The essay* I promised you has so far ripened that it could be dictated in an hour, but it is essential for me to speak to you first, so I shall make all the more haste to be with you soon. If a longer stay in Jena is not yet possible, I shall come for the day again soon; a short time together like this always bears much fruit.

At present I am correcting a part of the 'Cellini'; do send me a copy of the one for the next number, if you have one.

That is all for now; my very hearty greetings to you.

Jena,
27th February 1797.

I am in a somewhat woebegone condition, but I want at least to say good-evening. I am really confined to the house and sitting by the warm stove feeling cold from within; my head aches and my poor brain couldn't produce even the simplest worm by a free act of thought, and is unwillingly forced to tolerate the presence of sal-ammoniac and liquorice-water—things with the most obnoxious taste.

* This essay, intended as a reply to attacks on the *Xenia*, was not written.

Let's hope we shall soon be able to leave the humiliation of these material afflictions for the splendour of poetic composition; we are encouraged in this hope by believing in the miracles of the ordinary course of nature. My sincere greetings. Professor Loder tells me to have just a few days' patience.

273 To CARL AUGUST

*Jena, beginning of
March 1797.*

This time the Muses have chosen an unfriendly way, an extremely violent catarrh, to announce their arrival. However, their coming was once more opportune and they don't seem to disdain the weak state to which this affliction reduces me; on the contrary, they seem all the more kindly disposed. If the thread doesn't snap, I hope to finish my ['Herrmann und Dorothea'] soon; I am particularly pleased with it, as it seems likely to be something complete . . .

Herr [Alexander] von Humboldt is here. A positive cornucopia of natural sciences. Extremely interesting and instructive to talk with. He tells you more in an hour than you could learn from books in a whole week.

Schiller seems likely to buy Schmidt's garden by the Leutra. I will be glad to see him live outside in the fresh air, provided the novelty of it doesn't make the change too violent . . .

274 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
15th April 1797.*

I have already heard from Humboldt* that your Ernst is out of danger again; I felt very glad indeed and now let me congratulate you heartily on his recovery.

[Haydn's] Oratorio was very well performed yesterday and led me to a number of observations about historical art. It is a great pity that we cannot enjoy these experiences together, for we would confirm each others views much more quickly in the one thing necessary.

On Monday the first four Muses† depart and I am busy with the last five, and now I am making particular use of friend Humboldt's‡ remarks on prosody.

* Alexander von Humboldt.

† Cantos of *Herrmann und Dorothea* each of which bears the name of one of the Muses.

‡ Wilhelm von Humboldt's.

At the same time I have still been in the desert with the children of Israel, and knowing your convictions, I can hope that my attempt at 'Moses' will one day find favour with you. The starting point of my critical-historical-poetic work is that the existing books contradict one another and give themselves away; and the pleasure for me rests in separating what is humanly probable from what has a purpose and is merely a work of the imagination, and in finding in each case proofs of what I say. All hypotheses of this kind win one over because the thought is quite natural and the phenomena behind it are varied. I am very much enjoying working again for a short time on something in which, I can, as it were, play with interest. The poetry which has been occupying us for some time past is much too serious a pursuit. My hearty greetings to you; enjoy this beautiful season.

275 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
19th April 1797.

I am particularly pleased that you are now free from worry about the child, who, I hope, will continue to do well. My very warm greetings to your dear wife.

I have not seen Herr Bouterwek and I am delighted when gentlemen like this avoid me.

At present I am making a rapid study of the Old Testament and of Homer, reading both Eichhorn's Introduction to the former and Wolf's Prologomena to the latter. As I do so, the strangest ideas often dawn on me; we shall have a great deal to discuss in the future.

Do write out your scheme for 'Wallenstein' as soon as you can and send it to me. Owing to my studies at present this sort of reflection is becoming most interesting to me and will also be of use to you.

I shall tell you straight away one idea of mine on epic poetry: It must be heard in the greatest relaxation and comfort and therefore reason makes perhaps greater demands here than with other genres; as I was reading the Odyssey this time I wondered at finding these same demands so fully met. If you look closely at what we are told of the old grammarians and critics and of their talent and characters you notice clearly that they were men of reason who were not content until these great stories fell into line with their way of thinking. And so it remains true, as Wolf too tries to show,

that we owe our present Homer to the men of Alexandria---though admittedly this gives the poems quite a different appearance.

One more special remark. Some of the Homer verses have been declared quite false and entirely new, and these are like some in my poem which I inserted after it was finished, to make it clearer and more intelligible and to prepare in time for future incidents. I am very curious to know what I shall feel like adding to my poem or taking from it when my latest studies are complete; meantime the first version can be launched.

One of the chief characteristics of epic poetry is that it always moves forwards and backwards and this makes all retarding incidents epic. But they must not amount to real hindrances, which properly belong to drama.

If this demand for retarding, so overabundantly met in both the Homeric poems and present also in my plan, were genuinely essential and indispensable, then every plan which moves steadily towards its conclusion would have to be discarded or only to be considered as a subordinate historical genre. The plan for my second poem * has this fault, if it is one, and until we are clear on this point, I shall be careful not to put down a single verse of it. This idea seems an extremely fruitful one to me. If it is correct, it is bound to advance us a great deal, and I am quite willing to sacrifice everything to it.

The reverse seems to me to be true of the drama; more of that soon. My greetings to you.

276 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
26th April 1797.

It is true about the peace. Just as the French were moving into Frankfort once more and were still fighting hand to hand with the Austrians, a courier arrived with the news of peace. Hostilities were brought to an end forthwith and the opposing generals dined at the Red House with the Burgomaster. In exchange for their money and their sufferings the Frankfort people have experienced a *coup de théâtre* such as is rare in the course of history; and we have lived through this important time too. We shall see what this change of fortune brings the individual and the mass.

I agree entirely with what you say in to-day's letter about drama

* *Die Jagd*, which was never written, but its theme was used in the *Novelle*.

and epic, just as I am accustomed to your telling and interpreting all my dreams for me. I cannot add anything further now, I must send or bring you my plan. That will lead to our discussing some very fine points of which I shall say nothing in general now. If the material does not prove to be purely epic, though important and interesting in more than one sense, it should be possible to tell in what other form it really ought to be treated. My greetings to you; enjoy your garden and your child's recovery.

I spent the time with Humboldt very pleasantly and profitably; his presence has wakened my studies in natural history from their winter sleep, and I only hope they will not relapse into a spring sleep!

P.S. I find I cannot help asking one more question about our dramatic-epic problem. What do you think of these sentences?

In tragedy fate—or what is the same thing, a man's predestined nature that leads him blindly hither and thither—can and should be the driving and ruling factor. It must never lead him towards his aim, but always away from his aim; the hero must not be in command of his reasoning powers, reasoning must not enter tragedy at all except through minor characters and to the disadvantage of the main hero, etc.

The opposite is true of the epic; only reason, as in the *Odyssey*, or a serviceable passion, as in the *Iliad*, are epic agents. The Argonaut's voyage taken as an adventure is not epic.

277 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
28th April 1797.

When I was thinking yesterday about the theme of my new poem* so as to put it down for you, a very special affection for the work took hold of me anew; and this, after all that has been discussed by us in the meantime, seems a good omen for it. But as I know that I never finish anything once I have confided my plan to anyone at all, or have revealed it to anyone, I should prefer to wait a little before making this communication. So let us speak in general terms about the problem, and I can test my subject for myself by our results. I can work it out if I still have the courage and the wish to do so, and once this is done it would be sure to provide more material for thought than in the rough draft; and if I lose heart there is still time to come forward even if only with an idea.

* *Die Jagd.*

Have you read Schlegel's essay on epic poetry in last year's eleventh number of 'Deutschland'? Do read it. It is strange how with his sound head he is on the right track and yet blocks it again at once. Just because the epic poem cannot possess *dramatic unity*, because this strict unity is not readily obvious in the Iliad and the Odyssey, which recent thought considers even more pieced together than they are—because of this an epic poem ought neither to have nor to claim any unity at all, that is to my mind as good as saying, it ought to cease to be a poem. And these are supposed to be absolute ideas, though when one looks closer experience itself shows them to be false. For the Iliad and the Odyssey, even if they had passed through the hands of thousands of poets and revisers, show the impelling tendency towards the unity possessed by poetical and critical instinct. And after all, this new exposition of Schlegel's only support's Wolf's opinion, which in any case has no need of any such backing. For we cannot conclude from the fact that these great poems came gradually into being and have not been brought into any complete and perfect unity (though it may well be that both are much more perfectly composed than one imagines)—we cannot conclude from this that a poem of this sort neither can become nor ought to become complete, perfect, whole.

I have meantime been using your letters for a short essay in our discussions up to the present. Do go on working out the points, this is the most important matter for us both, theoretically and practically.

I have been reading Aristotle's 'Poetics' again, with the greatest of pleasure; reason in its most sublime form is a fine thing. It is very interesting how Aristotle draws purely on experience; this restricts him, if you like, and makes him somewhat too materialistic, but usually all the more sound. I found it most refreshing, for instance, to read with what generosity he defends poets against speculative thinkers and critics; he always lays stress on essentials only and in other things he is so little strict that I have more than once been astonished at it. But because of this his whole conceptions of poetry and of those aspects of it which he favours are so stimulating that I am going to read him again soon, particularly for the sake of some important passages which are not quite clear but whose meaning I should like to discover. On epic poetry, however, I cannot find any elucidation at all in the sense we should welcome.

Here are the last two verses of a poem 'Die empfindsame Gärtnerin'. It is intended as a pendant to the 'Musen und Grazien in der Mark'. Perhaps it is not much good, being a pendant.

I am spending these hours recovering from the distractions of the past month, ordering various business matters and dispatching them, so as to have the month of May to myself. I shall visit you if I can. Meantime, my hearty greetings.

278 To J. ERICHSON*

*Weimar,
28th April 1797.*

I am sending back the poems you lent me to read, with some observations as you asked. You appear to me to hold the mistaken idea—I have noticed it frequently in younger men—that one has to yield completely to any leaning towards poetry that one may feel. But it is life and knowledge that provide the author with the material without which his work must remain empty, even if he seems to be a born poet. I think you have nothing to lose by devoting yourself either to a life of action or to the sciences. For it is only after you have run a wide course in one of these spheres that you will be certain of your talent. If it seizes upon all the experience and knowledge you have gathered, if it welds all the most diverse elements into a unity, then the wonder you seem to be looking for will be there; and it cannot be produced in any other way. If on the contrary your liking for poetry does not survive this test, the knowledge won will still be a clear gain. Nobody can regret having made himself conversant with at least the outward forms of poetry, even if he is made for something quite different. With my best wishes.

279 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Jena,
28th May 1797.*

I was so pleased that for once you had written me a long letter, I'm answering directly by the post just to tell you I'm well too, though if I had the choice, I'd rather be at home. I'm not very comfortable on account of the alterations in Schiller's house, and the hot weather keeps one from going out during the day.

Give the enclosed letter and three shirts to Brecht; you need only wrap them in some large sheets of paper and seal the package. Send Frau von Stein some asparagus now and then, and in any case send our boy across to her sometimes.

* A student in Jena.

I'll see to the matter [about your brother] of which you wrote; I can quite understand why it's going so slowly. Good-bye; more on Tuesday. Tell Brecht I mean the letter to Herr Gerning to go with the post.

Herr Cotta has appeared with fine double louis d'ors. I'll not enjoy them till I can count them into your hand or put them by for you and the child.

Tell me which you'd rather have; one gold piece for yourself, just for fun, or something for the house; there's plenty to be got here.

Good-bye. Love me. I'll be back as soon as ever I can. To be honest, I haven't felt at ease here one single day.

I can't get used to the alterations in Schiller's house; it is so uncomfortable and awkward for me. Good-bye, my dear, and love to the child.

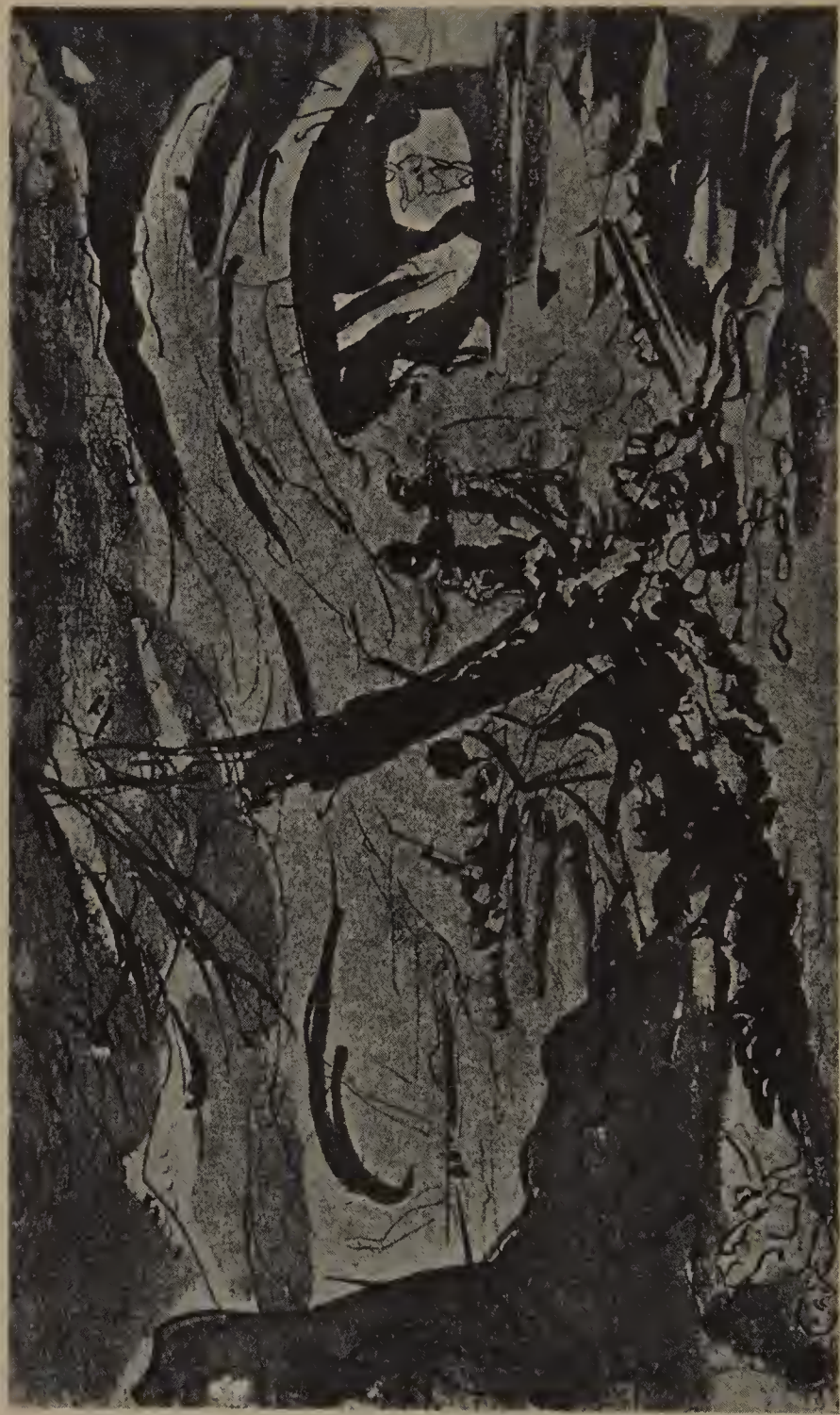
280 To KIRMS*

Weimar,
9th June 1797.

Dear Sir, To you personally I make no secret that I felt irritated on reading your yesterday's report. Up to now I have concerned myself only with the management of the theatre in general, and in fact only with the artistic side. I left you in entire charge of all other arrangements and of the police posted among the audience. And yet it seems the responsibility for disorders which occurred in my absence is being thrust upon me, and while I have the right to arrange contracts covering several years, I am being threatened—in what seems an irresponsible fashion—that the theatre may suddenly be closed without warning. I should very much like to know within whose power and arbitrary decision this lies.

I enclose a memorandum in which I dissimulate my indignation and mildly state what I now repeat: as long as there is no policeman posted on the right hand side (to-morrow it ought to be the ablest sergeant), as long as the benches are crowded together, hindering all communication and circulation, there will be no security from either isolated or general disturbances. If I am applied to for redress while my advice remains disregarded, I shall categorically repudiate all responsibility in this matter. I have already pressed for a hussar to be posted on the right, but this has never been done. And yet

* Goethe's deputy in the theatre management.



Walpurgisnacht-Szene, for Faust, by Goethe

this precaution is simpler now, as there is also an entrance on that side. To control a crowd it is essential to quell the first sign of disorder. Right at the entrance everyone should be obliged to take off his hat to remind him he owes a certain respect to the place. Once when Iffland was expected to play in the 'Räuber' before a packed house, I silenced an uproar at the start with a few stern and forceful words. Had I not stepped in at once on the very first sign of commotion, the performance would certainly have been a very stormy one. I have no doubt that the next two performances [—ending the season here—] will pass off quietly, and much may happen before next winter. Forgive my irritation, Sir. As we are closely associated in this matter, it is best to be quite frank.

With regard to Mlle Götz. . . .

281 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
22nd June 1797.

In my present restless state it is really necessary for me to give myself something to do, so I have decided to work at my 'Faust'. Even if I do not finish it, I mean at least to help it on a good deal by dividing up what has already been printed and regrouping it in large portions with what is already finished or thought out, thus preparing to carry out the plan which is really only an idea. Now I have once again been considering this idea and how to express it, and have more or less made up my mind. But I should like you now to be good enough to think the matter through one sleepless night, to set out the demands that you would make on it all, and so, like a genuine prophet, tell and interpret my own dreams for me.

The different parts of the poem can be treated differently as regards mood, so long as they agree with the spirit and tone of the whole; besides the whole work is subjective, so it is possible for me to work at odd moments and I am able to do something even at present.

Our study of the ballad has led me once again on to this misty, foggy path, and circumstances counsel me, in more than one sense, to stray along it for some time.

It may be that what is interesting in my new epic plan will float off in this fog of rhymes and stanzas; let us allow it to cohobate a little longer. This for to-day, with my greetings.

Karl was in my garden yesterday, very happy in spite of the bad

weather. I should have liked to have had your dear wife, had she remained here, as my guest this evening, and your family too. If you could only make up your mind to try out our Jena road again. But of course I would wish you better days for such an expedition.

282 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
29th July 1797.

To-morrow I am really going to leave here at last; that is exactly again four weeks later than I had intended. Seeing it is so difficult to get away, my journey ought by rights to be a very important one, but I am afraid it will just be like everything else we humans do. You will hear at least something from Frankfort.

I have lately been reading aloud those attempts of ours at ballads, and I saw what a good impression they made. In connection with your 'Handschuh' the question was raised whether one can say that *an animal licks its tongue*; I really was unable to give any definite answer.

Here is Schlegel's essay back; it seems to be the same with poems as with actions: one is badly off if they need justification.

My greetings to you. Not long ago you remarked that only poetry can bring one into the mood for poetry, and as this is quite true, one can see how much time a poet wastes, particularly if he does not lack material, when he spends his time on other concerns. I already fear the vastness of the empirical world; but let us hope for the best, and when we meet again let us refresh ourselves with many accounts and reflections. My greetings to you, your dear wife and your family.

283 To SCHILLER

Frankfort,
9th August 1797.

I have reached Frankfort in good spirits, safe and sound without the slightest hitch, and now in this cheerful, quiet house* I am reflecting on what it means at my age to travel. When we are younger what we see impresses and confuses us more for we are not capable of judging and coordinating it, yet we get on more easily for we absorb only what lies on our way and look less to left and right. Later we know more about things, a greater number interests

* Of Goethe's mother.

us, and we would be badly off if we were not helped by being calm and methodical. I am now going over systematically everything that has happened to me in the past week and trying out a pattern on Frankfort as a great city; then I shall get ready for the next part of my journey.

One thing that has particularly struck me is what people in a large town are really like. They live in a constant whirl of getting and spending, and this makes it impossible for them to create anything we could call an atmosphere. All their pleasures, even the theatre, aim merely at diverting them, and the reading public loves journals and novels because the former always and the latter usually bring diversion into its diversion.

I seem to have remarked even a kind of dread of poetic productions, at least in so far as they are poetic; and this seems quite natural from what I have noted. Poetry requires, indeed it demands, concentration; it isolates the individual against his will, it is importunate, and everywhere in the world (not to say in the great world) it is as troublesome as a too constant lover.

I am making a habit now of noting down everything I see as well as my thoughts about it, but without counting on any minute observations or a very ripe judgement, nor do I contemplate any further use of it. Once the whole ground is covered, one is better able to see what one has collected and can go on using it as material.

I have paid a few visits to the theatre and to reach an opinion on it I have written down a methodical outline. As I fill this out by degrees I have been very much struck by the fact that one can adequately describe in a travel diary only foreign countries where one knows nobody. One would never venture to describe a place where one usually stays, unless to make a mere catalogue of its features. And the same is true of anything more or less close to us; our feeling is that it would show disregard if we were openly to express even our most sincere and sober opinion on these things. These thoughts lead to nice results and show me the way to follow. For instance I am now making a comparison between the theatre here and in Weimar, and once I have seen the one in Stuttgart, there may be some general remarks to make on all three, something important that could perhaps be published.

My sincerest greetings; I hope you keep well and happy in your gardenhouse. My greetings too to your dear wife. If I can only get back to the Castle at Jena, they won't be able to drive me out again so soon. It is a good thing that I have already made my contri-

bution to the 'Musenalmanach', for on my travels I might as well hope to meet with a phoenix as with a poem. Farewell once more.

284 To KNEBEL*

*Frankfort,
10th August 1797.*

. . . As for me, I see more and more clearly that each of us ought to take his own trade seriously and everything else easily. A few verses I have to write interest me now more than things of much greater importance in which I have no say. If everyone does the like, things will go well both at home and throughout the country. I have been happily engaged these last few days here with so much to look at, and I have plenty to do for the next little while.

I am going to call then on our friend Meyer who has arrived at the Lake of Zurich. I mean to go on a short tour with him before I start for home. Italy doesn't attract me; I don't want to study freedom in the caterpillar and chrysalis stage, I'd much rather see the hatched-out butterfly in France.

All good wishes; think any new move over carefully before making it. There's nothing so dangerous as a false step at our age . . .

285 To SÖMMERING

*Frankfort,
21st August 1797.*

Authors are often blamed for liking to read their own works best; so what will you say when I ask you to go to the Forster-sale and buy me the two editions of my writings, both the earlier and the later one. Provided of course they go for a reasonable price and the ten volumes don't come to more than 8 florins. I haven't had a copy of my works in the house for some years now and I have a special reason for looking through them at present . . .

286 To C. G. VOIGT

*Frankfort,
24th August 1797.*

Very many thanks for your kindness in remembering me and for the news you sent. In spite of what interests us elsewhere, it is the conditions at home that always seem nearest and most easily and readily imaginable . . .

* Who was thinking of taking up a post in Bavaria.

They are not at all pleased with the harvest here; they say it is poor in bulk and weight and can't count as more than half an average one. There is better news from the Heidelberg district . . .

Nobody here knows what to think about war or peace. On the whole it seems that either things will come right for all or that all will get involved again. Austria is building up vast forces.

You cannot possibly picture the destitution in the places where the French are still quartered. Both town and village authorities are plunging so far into debt that they can never hope to recover. They are all bewildered and oppressed and can only think of their present safety. I hear that many people want to emigrate and leave behind all they have, rather than to mortgage it hopelessly . . .

287 To SCHILLER

Stuttgart,
31st August 1797.

That was roughly how I spent yesterday, quite pleasantly, as you see. Besides that, there are still a few observations that could be made. On the subject of architecture it was particularly saddening to realise what Duke Charles, who aimed at a certain magnificence, could have had put up, if he had possessed a real understanding of this art and if he had had the good fortune to find artists of sound talent for his plans. But it is obvious that all he possessed was a certain elegant leaning towards grandiosity, without real taste; and in his early days architecture in France, which served him as model, was itself in decline. I am most anxious at present to see Hohenheim.

After all this that I have written down, as if the greater part were not already known to you, I must let you know that I have come upon a style of poetry that we must use more in future and that might do well for the next 'Almanach'. I mean conversations in the form of poems. We have some very fine things of this kind dating from an older German period, and you can say a great deal in this form, one must just first get the feeling and make what is peculiar to this type one's own. For instance I have begun a conversation which a lad, in love with a girl at the mill, has with the mill-stream, and I hope to send it to you soon.* This treatment brings to life the poetic, figurative, allegorical elements, and is specially suitable for writing on a journey, when so many objects attract one's attention.

It is remarkable here too to note what objects are suited to this

* Der Junggesell und der Mühlbach.

particular method of treatment. To repeat my lament above, I cannot tell you how much a mistaken choice of subject distresses me, especially in the case of sculptors; for these artists obviously suffer the most from the mistakes and misunderstandings of their age. As soon as I meet Meyer and can make use of the reflections, which he has announced to me, I shall set to work at once and write down the chief points at least. Do go on thinking meantime about poetic forms and subjects.

I have several times also had occasion to reflect about the comic on the stage. My conclusions are that one can see it only in a large more or less uncultivated mass of people, and that unfortunately we seem to have no capital of this kind with which to trade poetically.

This district, by the way, has suffered much from the war and has still to suffer. While the French took five million from it, the Imperial troops are said to have devoured close on sixteen million. But one is struck, as a stranger, by the stupendous fertility of the land and can understand how such burdens can be borne.

You and yours are remembered with much love and joy, I might even say with enthusiasm. Farewell then, for to-day. Cotta has kindly invited me to stay with him; I have accepted with thanks, for I have until now suffered more, especially in this hot weather, from living in inns than from the roads.

288 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Stäfa in Switzerland,
23rd September 1797.*

At last I've got here safely and have settled down with Meyer at his people's place, very pleased and happy in a clean, pleasant house in really magnificent country. You'll see in the enclosed account how I have fared since I left Tübingen. There's nothing I wish for so much as to show you and our little boy these lovely, beautiful things some day.

I've heard nothing from you for a long time. I suppose your letters have stuck somewhere, because up to now they have been sent via Frankfort; you'll have got mine all the more regularly.

I have learnt from Privy-Councillor Voigt that our little boy was ill but is on the mend, and to-day Hofrat Schiller writes the child is quite well again, and his letter is dated the 7th September. So I'm quite reassured and take it that it's only by chance that your letters have not arrived . . .

Now I must add something in my own handwriting,* and tell you I love you dearly, tenderly and solely and my most earnest wish is for your love for me to remain the same always. In future I'm not going to travel about much unless I can take you with me. For I'd already rather be back with you, bidding you good-night or good-morning in the little Green Room, and taking my breakfast from your hand. We plan to come back soon, however, and to be in Frankfort again by the end of October or certainly early in November. I'm sure you'll be glad to hear this, and you'll be still more pleased when you know we are again at my dear Mother's house and can be with you a few days after that. But don't tell anyone about it; leave people not knowing if and when I am coming. Think of me and don't make eyes too sweetly at other people; in fact, better not to make any at all, for nobody has done it to me, not once on the whole journey. Indeed I've been thinking only of you; I'm getting you a pretty muslin dress. Good-bye. Kiss our little boy; I hope to find him quite well again when I come back. Greetings to [your sister] Ernestine and your Aunt. Love me always, and get everything ready to receive us in the best style . . .

289 To SCHILLER

*Stäfa,
26th September 1797,
towards evening.*

I had just finished my letter with a short postscript when Count Burgstall called on us; he has just returned from England by way of France and Switzerland with his young Scottish wife whom he had recently married. He sends you his best and warmest greetings and takes a very keen interest in all you are and do. His visit was a great pleasure to me; we found at once a wide choice of topic in his former leaning towards modern philosophy, his connection with Kant and Reinhold, his liking for you and also his earlier acquaintance with me. He brought some very amusing anecdotes from England and France; he had been in Paris on the 18th Fructidor, so he had taken part in a number of serious and amusing scenes. He sends the heartiest of greetings to you; now I shall finish this letter so that it can go with the boatman who is our postman. If you have a chance to convey Count Burgstall's greetings to Wieland, pray do so.

* By about that time Goethe had got used to dictating most of his letters.

Stäfa,
17th October 1797.

We have hardly got back from the incredible peace enfolding these small cantons hidden away among their rocks, and at once the shouts of war resound behind and before us from the Rhine and from Italy. A good deal will have been decided by the time you get this letter, so I shall only say a word about things here. The French have sent to the people of Bern, demanding the instant expulsion of the English ambassador. They give as their reason that 'one cannot see what he can have to do at present in Switzerland, beyond creating and inciting enemies of the Republic inside and outside the country'. The people of Bern have replied that it was not their responsibility alone, as the ambassador was accredited to all the cantons. Now the French deputy has arrived in Zurich. Further developments are awaited. It seems to me that the French are picking a quarrel with the Swiss; those who remain in the Directory are not friendly towards them; Barthélémy, the 'patron-saint of Switzerland', has been exiled. A sensible man who has arrived from Paris and witnessed the latest scenes there, maintains that this act was levelled not only at the royalists, but at the peace-party as well.

The weather was very good to us during our eleven days of travelling about the cantons Schwytz, Uri, Unterwalden and Zug. Father Lorenz was as cheerful as when we met him years ago. A thousand times, indeed constantly, I kept recalling the time we travelled here together. It was a great joy to see these things again and in several ways to test my development by them; mineralogy, with my widened knowledge of it, was a very pleasant topic of conversation. It is interesting to see the local agriculture here and the way its products are used, so simply and easily. There happened to be a market at Bellenz, and the road to the Gotthardt-pass was alive with droves of very fine cattle. There must have been close on 4,000 head being driven over this year, each of them worth 10 to 15 louis d'ors in these parts. The cost of transport for each beast is about 5 laubthaler, so if they are sold, there is a profit per head of 2 louis-d'ors on the purchase price, or 3 laubthaler if expenses are deducted. So think what a huge sum is coming into the country during these days. And besides, there's a considerable wine trade with Swabia, and their cheese is in great demand, so an unbelievable amount of money is pouring in and everything is getting very dear.

I am enclosing a little sketch of what I see from my balcony. Here by the Lake of Zurich the agriculture is really wonderful and at the moment the vintage makes everything very lively.

Meyer sends his respects; his pen and brush have both been busy. The last crate from Rome has just arrived, the one with the copy of the Aldobrandini Wedding; we had been anxious about it for some time. We intend to return to Zurich in a few days and to wait and see what sort of route back the goddess of war or of peace will show us. We hope to find you well and happy when we get home. My best respects to the Duchess, and please keep me a place in your affections.

291 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

Tübingen,
30th October 1797.

We have given up the Basle excursion, my dear, and we've come straight to Tübingen from Zurich . . . You'll be quite pleased to see your friend so soon, won't you? For I can say it's only for you and our little boy that I'm coming back. You are the only ones that need me, the rest of the world can do without me. Good-bye, love me as I love you. I can't tell you how I am looking forward to seeing you again.

292 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
25th November 1797.

Very many thanks for the letter and the parcel I have just received. Let me say at once and without much premeditation that I not only share your view, but would even go much further. Everything poetic ought to be in verse! That is my conviction. The fact that it has been possible gradually to introduce poetic prose, only goes to show that people have completely lost sight of the difference between prose and poetry. It would be just as sensible for someone to order a dry lake to be made in his park and for the landscape-gardener to try to do this by laying out a swamp. These hybrids are only for bungling amateurs, as swamps are for amphibians. Meanwhile the evil has grown to such a pitch in Germany that no-one is aware of it any longer; it reminds one of those goitrous people who look on a healthy-shaped throat as a sign of divine displeasure. All dramatic works (and perhaps above all comedies and farces) ought to

be in verse. If they were, it would be easier to see who could write them. But at present the playwright can do almost nothing but make concessions. So you could hardly be blamed for wanting to write your 'Wallenstein' in prose; if you regard it, however, as an independent work, it simply must be in verse.

In any case we have to forget the times in which we live if we are to act on our convictions. For surely there has never been such quackery with regard to principles as there generally is now, and it still remains to be seen what good modern philosophy will do.

After all poetry is based on the description of man's empirical-pathological state, and which of our present illustrious experts and so-called poets is prepared to admit this? Take a man like Garve who claims to have devoted his life to thinking and is reckoned as a kind of philosopher—has he the slightest inkling of such a principle? Does he not call you a deserving poet because it has amused you to propound words of reason with the voice of a poet—which is allowable, certainly, but not laudable. I would willingly let these prosaic natures recoil in horror from the so-called immoral themes, if only they had a feeling for what is poetically moral, e.g. in your 'Polycrates' or your 'Ibycus', and if only they would appreciate these ballads.

Especially now that Meyer has returned from Italy with such harsh strictures, let us become more and more strict in principles while surer and easier in practice! This will only be possible if we keep our eyes fixed within these limits while we are working.

Here is my elegy* with my hope for its friendly reception.

We owe Zelter six bottles of champagne for the unshaken good opinion he has had of us.† I very much like his Indian legend‡; the thought is original and bold; I have not yet once heard his setting of Mignon's song. The composers only play their own pieces and amateurs have favourites of their own too. I have not yet in the whole course of my journey met anyone willing to make a study of what was strange and new to him.

Do let me have a few copies of the melodies for the 'Almanach'; there are none at all in what I have received.

I do hope you are getting on very well with your 'Wallenstein', because then we shall see you here all the sooner.

My hearty greetings, and remember me to your family.

* *Amyntas*.

† That the new Almanach would not again contain *Xenia* or the like.

‡ *Der Gott und die Bajadere*, Goethe's ballad.

Enclosed my article. Please think it over, use, modify, expand it. In the last few days I have been making use of these ideas both while reading the 'Iliad' and Sophocles, and for some epic and tragic themes which I have been trying to motivate in my mind. And these ideas seemed to me very useful, indeed decisive.

I realised why it is that we moderns are so inclined to mix the genres that we cannot even distinguish between them. The reason seems to be that, while works of art ought always to follow their own laws, artists often gratify the public which wants to be able to find everything true. Meyer, too, noticed a tendency to bring all art nearer to painting, because there attitude and colour combine to imitate reality. One can see a similar movement in literature towards the drama, as best representing what is actually present. Novels in form of letters for instance are completely dramatic, and something almost like dialogues can be introduced as Richardson too has done. But novels in narrative form, interspersed with dialogue, would have to be considered unsatisfactory.

I am sure that time and again you must have heard people say after reading a good novel that they would like to see it on the stage. And what a number of bad plays have been the result! In the same way people want to see an etching of every scene that interests them. To ensure that there is nothing left to imagination, everything must be made perceptible by the senses, actually present and dramatic. The plays themselves must completely resemble reality. But the artist should use all his powers to combat these tendencies which are childish, barbaric and lacking in taste. He ought to draw a magic circle round each art and preserve its characteristics and peculiarities. The Ancients did so, and it made them the artists they are. But who can part his ship from the waves on which it rides? One can make little headway against wind and current.

For instance, the classical bas relief stood out but little from its background; it was a slightly raised tasteful indication of an object on one plane. But man could not be satisfied with this; it soon was made to stand out further, then completely, limbs and whole figures were disengaged, perspective was added, roads, clouds, mountains and landscapes reproduced. And as this too—though quite inadmissible—was done by men of talent, it found favour all the more easily with uneducated people whose mind it suited so well.

* Enclosing the article *Ueber Epische und Dramatische Dichtung*.

Meyer in his essay tells the very nice appropriate story how in Florence clay figures first have been glazed, then painted in one colour and finally in various colours and enamelled.

To come back to my article: I have applied its rules to 'Hermann und Dorothea' and now ask you to do the same; this leads to quite interesting remarks, e.g.:

(1) That in this poem no exclusively epic *motive* is used, i.e. not any retrograde one, but only the four others which the epic poem has in common with the drama*;

(2) That it does not describe people outwardly acting but only such as are withdrawn within themselves and that it thereby deviates from the epic and draws nearer to the drama;

(3) That it rightly abstains from similes, as with a more or less ethical subject the intrusion of pictures from the physical world would only have had an irksome effect;

(4) That it still has been influenced to some extent by the 'third world' (though this is not at once obvious), as the fate of the world is interwoven partly in fact and partly symbolically through persons, and slight traces are present of presentiment, of the connection of the visible and the invisible world; this I am convinced takes the place of the images of the gods of the Ancients, although of course it lacks their physical-poetical power.

Finally I must tell you of a strange task I have set myself. It is to see whether or not there is room for an epic poem between the death of Hector and the departure of the Greeks from the coast of Troy. I am inclined to think there is not, for the following reasons:

(1) There is nothing retrograde, everything moves steadily forward.

(2) The few remaining retarding events divide one's interest among several persons, and though these events concern large numbers, they seem like the fate of individuals. The death of Achilles appears to me to be a magnificently tragic theme. The Ancients left us tragedies on the death of Ajax, the return of Philoctetus, and Polyxena, Hecuba, and other subjects of that epoch have also been treated. The taking of Troy itself, the moment

* The motives enumerated in *Ueber epische und dramatische Dichtung* are: (1) progressive motives which further the development of the story; (2) retrograde motives which keep it back from its goal; (3) retarding motives; (4) motives which introduce what has happened before the beginning of the poem; (5) motives which introduce what is to happen after the end of the poem. The three worlds are: the physical world, the moral world, and the world of fantasies, premonitions, apparitions, chance and fate.

when a great destiny is fulfilled, is neither epic nor tragic; if treated as a true epic it can be viewed only in the distance, either in the past or the future. Virgil's rhetorical-sentimental treatment is irrelevant.

This is my present view, *salvo meliori*; unless I am wrong this subject, like many another, cannot be discussed theoretically. We may see what genius has done, but who can say what it might or ought to do?

The messenger is leaving, so just a greeting to you and your dear wife. Keep quite quiet until the evil season is at an end. I am hearing good about our 'Almanach' from all sides; I do not yet know when I can come, theatre-affairs will keep me longer than I had thought, I fear, despite my eagerness to see you again. Greetings once more.

1798-1805

SCHILLER

Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort
Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen,
Und hinter ihm in wesenlosem Scheine
Lag, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine.

Goethe's Epilog zu Schillers
Lied von der Glocke

SCHILLER

His spirit strode mightily onwards to the eternal regions
of the true, the good, the beautiful. And behind him, a
vain illusion, lay what dominates us all, the vulgar.

Goethe's Epilogue to Schiller's
Song of the Bell

THE following years were fruitful in poetry; Goethe again wrote a large number of poems. He began the *Helena*, later included in *Faust Part II* and wrote the *Natürliche Tochter*, a play in five acts, which were to form the first part of a trilogy on the French Revolution, but only this first part was ever written. An epic, *Achilleis*, begun in these years also remained unfinished. *Götz von Berlichingen* was re-modelled to make it suitable for stage performance, Voltaire's *Mahomet* and *Tancred* were translated as well as Diderot's *Neveu de Rameau*. An essay on Winckelmann, the author of the *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* which in 1764 had inaugurated a new epoch in the history of art, the translation of Cellini's autobiography and large parts of the *Farbenlehre* were published or got ready for publication in these years. Goethe also contributed to the *Propylæen*, a literary periodical edited by Schiller, and took a most active interest in the new *Literaturzeitung* of Jena, founded in 1803. Between September of that year and the end of 1804 he personally invited a score or so of prominent people to contribute. He regularly sent lists of those whom he suggested inviting to the publisher Eichstädt and gave his judgement on what was sent in. During the next three years he wrote over 120 letters to Eichstädt in connection with this publication.

The circle of his acquaintances widened steadily; in 1798 Goethe for the first time got in touch with C. F. Zelter, musician and composer in Berlin, soon afterwards Director of the Academy of Singing there; he later became one of Goethe's best friends. Jean Paul Richter, the novelist and humourist, author of the *Flegeljahre*, spent some time in Jena and Weimar, and with Johannes von Müller, the Swiss historian, Goethe started a correspondence in 1803. Goethe's interest in the management of the stage was increased; Schiller's new tragedies and Schlegel's Shakespeare translations were produced for the first time.

However at the beginning of 1805, in the midst of this busy and happy life, Goethe fell ill and all through that spring he remained very unwell. At the same time Schiller, who had suffered from consumption for years, grew markedly worse. The friends saw each other for the last time on May 1st; Schiller died a week later.

Weimar,
6th January 1798.

I congratulate you on being satisfied with the finished part of your 'Wallenstein'. You know so well what you ought to expect of yourself that I have every confidence in what you say. It has already been a great benefit to us both that our natures have fitted so happily together, and I hope this will continue. I have been to you the spokesman of objects, and you have recalled me to myself from the over-zealous observation of externals and their relation to each other. You have taught me to look more fairly at the complexity of the inner man, you have given me a second youth and made me a poet once more, when I had practically ceased to be one.

My journey still affects me very strangely. I can make no kind of use of the material I brought back from it; I have quite lost the mood of doing anything at all. I can remember this kind of effect from former times, and from many occasions and circumstances I know very well that impressions have to be active within me for a very long time before they are ready for use in my poetry. So I have made a complete pause and am just waiting to see what my first stay in Jena will bring me.

Körner's reception of 'Pausias' again is really remarkable. The thing is to make one's writings as good and as many-sided as possible, so that everyone can choose out something and have his share in it. There is something right in Körner's remark, the group shown in the poem is as clear-cut as if it were painted, animated only by feeling and memory, and this accentuates still more the poet's rivalry with the painter.

By the way, the poems in the last 'Musenalmanach' have again shown me clearly that even by their most precious interest others can teach us nothing and no sort of criticism can help us. As long as a work of art does not exist, no one conceives the possibility of it. As soon as it does, praise and blame remain always only purely subjective; many a man whose taste one cannot question wants to add to it or to shorten it, and in doing so would perhaps ruin it. This shows that even purely negative criticism—possibly its most important type—can avail us nothing.

I have many reasons for wishing your 'Wallenstein' to be finished soon. While the work is in progress, as well as later, let us once more carefully study all the requirements of drama. If in future

you are precise in determining beforehand the plan and exposition, it would be strange if with your experience and talent and your wealth of ideas you could not write a few plays every year. It seems clearly necessary to me for the dramatic poet to appear frequently, to keep on renewing his effects and to build upon them, if he has the talent for it.

Our poor friend Charlotte Kalb is really wretched. She has already lost the best part of her sight, and it is quite possible that she may lose it entirely.

I shall remember about 'Julian'.*

Here is the philosophical discourse† which I promised you. I would have liked the Chinaman still better if he had seized the chafing-dish and handed it to his opponent, saying: 'Yes I create it, now make use of it.' I should like to know what the Jesuit would have replied.

Schelling's book‡ brought some thoughts to my mind again, which we must talk over at greater length. I am quite willing to admit that it is not nature that we come to know, but that we only apprehend nature through certain qualities and capacities of our minds. There are of course many stages of perception between the child's wish for an apple from the tree and the fall of the apple which is said to have woken in Newton the first thought of his theory; and it would be most desirable if we could be shown these stages very clearly and at the same time given to understand which is considered the highest. The transcendental idealist, of course, believes he occupies a supreme place; one thing, however, that I do not like about him is that he quarrels with the other modes of conception, and you cannot really quarrel with a mode of conception. How can one shake certain people's belief in the external practicalness of organic beings, when everyday experience seems to illustrate this doctrine and it provides such an apparent explanation of the most difficult phenomena? You know how much I am attached to the idea of the practicalness of organic beings in themselves; and yet it is impossible to deny that they are determined by and connected with externals, and this brings one more or less near to that mode of conception, which, besides, is also indispensable as a means of expression in exposition. However the idealist, too, may struggle

* *Julianus Apostata*, a tragedy which Schiller intended writing.

† A philosophical dialogue between a Chinese and a Jesuit in a book by Erasmus Francisci, *Neupolierter Geschichts- Kunst- und Sittenspiegel*, 1670.

‡ *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*, 1797.

against things in themselves, before he knows where he is, he comes up against things outside himself and it seems to me that when he first meets them, they are as troublesome to him as the chafing-dish to the Chinaman. I always think that the one party approaching from outside, can never reach the spirit, whereas the other, coming from within, may never get as far as the objects; so it is always best to remain in a philosophical state of nature (Schelling's 'Ideas', p. xvi) and to make the best possible use of one's undivided existence until the philosophers come to some agreement on how to put together again what they have separated.

I have come upon a few more points again which I need to clarify for my next work, and I should like to ask you personally for your opinion. My greetings to you. I would like to postpone my arrival for a little so as then to spend an enjoyable and fruitful time together with you.

295 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
14th February 1798.

. . . I entirely agree with you that a journey, such as you describe, * contains some fine epic themes, but I would never venture to treat such a subject, because I lack direct observation and I consider a sensuous identification with the object, which can never be attained by description, as absolutely indispensable to this genre.

Besides, one would have to compete with the Odyssey which has already used up the most interesting themes. The finest theme, how a woman is touched by the arrival of a stranger, cannot be treated since Nausikaa. How inferior, in classical writings themselves, are even Medea, Helen, Dido, even with regard to their circumstances, to the daughter of Alkinous. Vaillant's Narine, or anything like it, would always remain only a parody of those glorious figures. But this brings me back to my first remark, that direct experience may perhaps show us situations which still have enough charm. The following will make clear how necessary immediate apprehension is:

For us whose home is far from the sea the Odyssey possesses charm, but it is really only the ethical content of the poem that affects us; our imagination can only imperfectly and feebly support the whole descriptive part. But what splendour the poem took on for

* e.g. that of Cook or any other explorer.

me when I read parts of it in Naples and Sicily! It was as if you had varnished a dull old picture, giving clarity and harmony to the work. I must confess that it ceased to be a poem for me, it seemed to be nature herself, and this was all the more important for the ancients, whose works were declaimed in the presence of nature. How many of our poems would bear being read in the market-place or anywhere in the open air?

My hearty greetings to you and remember me to your dear wife. Make use of every favourable moment.

296 To SCHILLER

*Weimar,
17th March 1798.*

I think we shall be together before next week is out. All the affairs on which I have influence are going along, and will probably continue to do so. And now I very much need to range and order a thousand ideas I have; and for this the absolute quiet in Jena and your presence only can help me.

I enclose a few extraordinary letters, telling of an adventure that sounds strange in our days. I know the people myself and the letters vouch for their own truth.

I have once more read the French essay on 'Herrmann', with your eyes, and I also find it such that one should not be altogether dissatisfied with it; it would indeed be a marvel had a Frenchman written it, but the author is, as I well know, a German. By the way, we are going to have a strange amalgam in the future, so many French- and Englishmen are learning German, so much is being translated, and our literature is more active in various branches than the others.

So the poor Bernese have suffered a sad defeat. Meyer fears that now one canton after the other will be annihilated, for they still think in the way the old Swiss did; but patriotism and individual brave endeavour are as outdated as the priesthood and aristocracy. Who will be able to withstand the mobile French masses, successfully organised and led with skill and determination? We are lucky here in the midst of the immobile nordic masses which they will not be so eager to attack.

If you are keen on distraction and all kinds of strange plans, essays and notions, I can supply plenty of those; what I am bringing covers practically a ream of paper.

I am not asking again about your journey here; as you mean to spend only a day, it will not matter if I am already in Jena. My hearty greetings; remember me to your dear wife and work as hard as possible.

297 To A. W. SCHLEGEL

Weimar,
1st May 1798.

My dear Sir, his Highness the Duke has instructed me to bring you to the so-called Roman House to-morrow morning, to meet Mr Mellish, who has such reverence for Shakespeare and such admiration for your translation.

So would you be good enough to come here about 11 o'clock?

I hope to see you this evening at the theatre.

298 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
5th May 1798.

Iffland finished yesterday as the bailiff in 'Aussteuer'*; in the course of his performances he has given rise to many reflections in me that more or less coincide with what you say. We shall have much to discuss about this.

I do not know how to advise you about 'Wallenstein', though I believe what you told me you had in mind would be the best, considering your way of working, the play as far as I know it, and the outward circumstances. No man can serve two masters, and of all masters I would least choose the public who sit in a German theatre. I have learned to know them well again on this occasion.

I cannot now think of anything, but getting more intimate with Homer's poems when I come to stay with you. The best introduction will be for us to read them together.

I have brought my 'Faust' a good step further. I have had a copy made of the old manuscript I had, which was in great confusion; now the parts are being separated, numbered and arranged in the order of a detailed scheme. So now I can make use of any moment of the right mood, elaborate isolated parts and sooner or later put it all together.

This has revealed something very strange: Some of the tragic scenes, written in prose, are so realistic and powerful as to be quite unbearable in proportion to the rest. So I am busy recasting them

* A play by Iffland himself.

in rhyme, for then the idea shimmers as if through a veil, softening the immediate effect of the stupendous material.

My hearty greetings to you. Our good barometers tell us only about the weather in the immediate future; one would really think we must be at the beginning of a rainy spell, but who can prophesy this?

299 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
15th May 1798.

Your letter finds me at the 'Iliad' again! Studying it always chases me round and round through delight, hope, understanding and despair.

I am more than ever convinced that the poem is an indivisible unity and that no man, living or yet to be, is fit to judge it. I for instance keep finding that I judge it subjectively. The same has happened to others before and will happen to others after us. Yet my first idea of an 'Achilleis' was right, and I must stick to it, if I am to write anything of the sort.

The 'Iliad' seems to me so rounded and complete that nothing can be added to it or taken from it, whatever one says. One would have to try to isolate any new poem too if one undertook to write one, even if it followed directly in time upon the 'Iliad'.

The 'Achilleis' is a *tragic* theme but because of a certain breadth, it does not reject epic treatment.

The theme is thoroughly *sentimental* as well: these two qualities would make it suited for a modern work and would balance each other in any strictly realistic treatment. The purely personal interest of an individual forms its subject, while the 'Iliad' deals with that of nations, continents, the earth and the heavens.

Do please turn these things over in your mind. If you think that a poem of some length and involving much work might be undertaken along these lines, I can make a beginning at any time. For I have more or less come to the conclusion about how it is to be carried out; but as usual I shall keep it to myself until I am able to read the finished passages.

I have no notion nor can I guess what the unexpectedly pleasing novelty* might be, but I shall quite welcome it. In the course of my life I have yet to meet with something good that has not been

* The novelty announced by Schiller as a surprise for Goethe was Wilhelm von Humboldt's essay on *Herrmann und Dorothea*.

prepared, long awaited and hardly gained. I am sorry I cannot come sooner than Sunday.

My greetings to Cotta, and thank him once more for the kind services he has so liberally rendered me. I am still in his debt for some of them, which I shall probably soon be able to settle.

I am meaning, by the way, to follow the procedure of which I recently told you with regard to our theoretical-empirical essays; as soon as 25 sheets are ready to hand in a neat copy, it will be easy to come to an agreement.

In future I shall as far as possible not make any promise about a manuscript until it is ready for printing; and there are so many factors just about this one.

Schlegel cannot fail to obtain the professorship; his Shakespeare translation has disposed the Duke in his favour, and a favourable report has already been sent to Gotha.

My greetings to you. I heartily long to see you and work at something important. It will soon be a year since I did anything, and that seems very strange to me. Remember me to your dear wife and enjoy the fine weather out of doors.

300 To HEINRICH MEYER

*Jena,
8th June 1798.*

. . . Schiller's health is good and our conversations very fruitful. But, alas, his artistic planning of his garden drives me to despair. His new kitchen is so placed that the N.W. wind, which we sometimes get just on the finest evenings, spreads smoke and above all the smell of fat over the whole garden; there is no getting away from it.

My best greetings. Let me know how far your own work has got to.

301 To A. W. SCHLEGEL

*Jena,
18th June 1798.*

I am going to answer your friendly letter of the 10th straight away, as a greeting for you in Dresden.

Many thanks for the 'Athenaeum' you sent; I should have liked and enjoyed its contents even if the authors had not spoken of me

and my work with such decided approval. I hope I shall go on deserving the good my younger friends think and say of me, at least by continuing to progress until nature puts the usual end to it.

We shall have a good deal of pleasant conversation over this in detail when we meet again or when I can find a peaceful hour to write more fully. You set to work with great energy and precision, but do be moderate and just too. These are the qualities that give the most effective weight to our opinions in the long run . . .

If ever I looked forward eagerly to meeting anyone, I do so in Herr Zelter's case. This particular combination of [Music and Poetry] is so important, and I have a great many thoughts about them both which I can only develop by discussing them with someone like him. As far as I can judge, what characterises his compositions is never a sudden inspiration, it is a radical reproduction of the poet's intention. Please give him my regards, when you can. How I wish he could some day carry out his promise to visit us . . .

302 To WIELAND*

*Oberrossla,†
22nd June 1798.*

Here I am at Oberrossla, my dear brother in Apollo and companion in Ceres, taking possession of my holding and what goes with it. I am greatly pleased we are such near neighbours, and would herewith beg you most politely to leave your palaces about mid-day to-morrow and come to our hut. Condescend to take a frugal meal (with the lawyer and the landlord) and give me the joy of seeing you again after so long. At the same time a hearty invitation to your dear wife and whatever members of your family will delight us with their presence. Hoping for a favourable answer.

303 To BUCHHOLZ‡

*Weimar,
end of June 1798.*

Dear Sir, I have been asked to enquire if you would be prepared to take a young man as your apprentice. He is nearly 17 years of age; his father, whom I knew to be a very honest man, has recently

* At his farm at Osmannstedt.

† Goethe's recently-bought farm.

‡ An apothecary; one of several letters on the subject Goethe wrote to various people.

died, leaving him the house and the apothecary's shop. He has been familiar with this kind of work since childhood, and his relatives would like him to have instruction under you and board and lodge at your house. The term of apprenticeship would be about three or four years; you would decide both that and the fee. Hoping for a favourable answer.

304 To WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT*

Weimar,
16th July 1798.

I received your friendly letter safely some time ago and the fine mineral specimens too. Please convey my thanks to M. Dolomieu for the latter.

When I got here Schiller surprised me with your essay on my 'Herrmann und Dorothea'. We read most of it together; after some interruptions I finished it alone and then re-read some parts with the help of the *Contents* and the *Summary*. My heartiest, best thanks.

I ventured to hope you would carry your interest in me and my work with you when you went to that remarkable country. But I had never even the faintest idea you would give such continued thought to my poem and that you would undertake to write a work of that size on it at a time which offered you such a variety of enjoyment. This pleases me all the more because it shows how close are your ties with art, your native country and your friends.

I assure you the interest you take in my poem would have been almost too flattering, even if you had not judged it so favourably. However, it is yours as well as mine and therefore you are bound to have the feeling for it one has for one's own work. This isn't merely a polite remark, for you know how constantly and closely we in our circle here have been working together for some time now to clarify each other's ideas . . .

I am now very anxious to start on a new epic poem† . . . I will be preparing this practical proof of my gratitude, but meanwhile it is Schiller who will show you at more length how the theorist accepts your deductions. Heaven has denied this talent to me . . .

I had written all this three weeks ago and had a good deal more to add to it. But since then I have been tossed to and fro like a ball between Weimar and Jena, and I must finish this letter now so that it can go, even just as it is . . .

* In Paris.

† The *Achilleis*.

Weimar,
16th July 1798.

My dear old friend, if you had sent me a line now and then, I am sure you would have heard from me sooner in return. For it doesn't mean anything if I don't answer a letter and for some time don't let you have any news of me. The days and the years fly past at such a breathless pace that one has hardly time to collect one's thoughts; and downhill the pace seems quicker than ever. If we were to meet again, I hope you would recognise the inner man; as for the outer, they tell me I have grown stout with the years. I'm enclosing a bit of string to show my girth, so that you can measure and see if I am better preserved than you in this respect; for we used to be fairly alike in figure. I am well and busy and as happy as one can expect to be here on earth.

I hope to hear the same of you and yours. My heartiest greetings to them.

Weimar,
21st July 1798.

I do wish most heartily for you that you may very soon find yourself once more in the right mood for poetical work. Unfortunately being in your garden is as bad for you in some ways as it is good in others, especially now that you have started building. I know this strange distraction all too well from former times, for I have wasted an unbelievable amount of time over it. The mechanical labour of man, the craftsman's creation of something new, provide a pleasing entertainment for us, while our own activity is reduced to nothing. It is almost like tobacco smoking. Really they should treat us poets as the Dukes of Saxony treated Luther, snatch us from the highway and shut us up in a mountain fastness. I wish somebody would do this at once with me, then my 'Tell' would be finished by Michaelmas* . . .

Weimar,
28th July 1798.

Your letter reached me rather late to-day. Do impress upon the woman who carries the letters to bring them herself at once. These

* Goethe never wrote *Tell* which he planned as an epic, but Schiller took the idea up and used it for his play *Wilhelm Tell*.

people sometimes save themselves trouble and give the things to small boys who get late carrying them around.

Kant sets this twaddler* right very neatly. I like the old man's way of always repeating his principles and hammering on the same spot every time. A younger, practical man is as well to take no notice of his opponents, but an older one, a theorist, ought never to let an awkward word pass. We shall do the like in future . . .

308 To SCHILLER†

Weimar,
5th September 1798.

Only a note, as I hope to see you to-morrow. Here are your two ballads back again; they are both very good indeed. I have nothing to suggest about the Christian dragon, it is very fine and suitable. In the 'Bürgschaft' it seems inaccurate from a physiological point of view that a man who had managed to get out of a river on a rainy day should be dying of thirst, as presumably his clothes would still be soaking. But apart from the realistic truth, not thinking of the skin's power to absorb, thirst does not quite satisfy one's imagination and mood. I admit, however, that I cannot think of any suitable alternative arising from the traveller himself; both the external motives, an act of nature and human violence, are well chosen.

Will you kindly be good enough to pass on the enclosed note to Professor Lenz and to bring me the book when you come. Do not go back on your good intention. Your journey is certain to do you good. I enclose the excellent Sternbald‡; it is incredible how empty this nice vessel is.

309 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
6th September 1798.

We were eagerly expecting you and as for your cold, you would have cured it, according to our Prince's proved theory, by exposing yourself to the fresh air.

* Nicolai in *Briefe über die Buchmacherei*.

† Returning his two newest ballads, *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen* and *Die Bürgschaft*.

‡ The novel *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* by Tieck.

I am detained by the theatre; every day there is something to be arranged about the building or furnishing of it, or I would have come to see you again before now.

I enclose the poem to the Duchess; now you supply a title for it!

The little poem* I am returning is charming, it has exactly the tone of lamentation.

I have found three rather important misprints in the proofs of the 'Almanach' I have here: page 20 the second last line, *gereeht* for *gereiht*; page 27 in Matthieson's poem, the second pentameter, *Singt* for *Siegt*; I cannot recollect the third at the moment.

We meant to discuss the cover together. Be kind enough to send across the better paper as soon as you can, so that we can have it dyed and the copies printed and painted.

The cover of the 'Propyläen' is ready too; here is a sample from the supplement. It was impossible to foresee the technical difficulties that were and still are to be overcome. But our Facius has struggled faithfully with them, in a truly German spirit, and I hope for some amusement out of it.

I have been going through all my papers in my mind, but I have found nothing that would help you with your 'Almanach'. The poem I had thought out for the Voigt-wedding was never finished. It would still be in time for the 'Almanach', but how can I get into the *mood* for it!?!?

Friend [Jean Paul] Richter recently put this question in a new light for me, assuring me—modestly, I must admit, and with his own special way of saying it—that this business of mood was all humbug: all *he* has to do was to drink coffee, and immediately, safe and sound, he finds himself writing things that delight the whole of Christendom.

So let us take this to heart and also his assurance that everything is *physical*; then we may be able to produce two or three times as many works.

This noble friend, by the way, means to settle in Weimar next winter; he has already taken rooms above our little Maticek. I am most curious to know how he will take to the theatrical-domestic medley there.

I have saved up a number of curiosities, because I hoped to see you either here or in Jena.

* Thekla's song: *Des Mädchens Klage* included in *Wallenstein*.

*Weimar,
6th October 1798.*

Here is the Prologue * back again; I have welcomed your alterations, for they are most suitable. But in place of the passage I have scored, I should have liked to have inserted this other one which I am sending in manuscript. What I was aiming at was:

- (1) for a little more to be spoken by our actors;
- (2) for a little less by Iffland, and
- (3) that some passage could be taken as referring to Schröder.

If you are kind enough to let me have some printed copies of the Prologue by Monday, I can send one to Schröder at once, with a few polite words, and one to Stuttgart.

And by the same express messenger you could send me back the proof-sheet, if you no longer need it, and let me know if you are willing to accept my passage; in that case I shall have both copies for despatch made at once.

Here comes part of the Prelude.† Go on working on it, and although I cannot promise you I shall accept your alterations by the next time. Everyone is already so trained to the rhymes and rhythm, everyone is so drilled to the cues, that I do not dare to alter a thing, fearing they would come to a halt at once. My greetings to you; there is such a bustle here now that only the hope it will soon be evening and all over is still keeping me going.

*Weimar,
8th December 1798.*

I very much wish I could discuss this present matter with you one evening, for it is a great deal more important than the question, in what order the armour ought to appear. I am being as brief as I can and omitting all points on which we agree.

After a good many deliberations I consider the astrological motive better than the new one.

The *superstitious belief in astrology* rests upon the vague feeling that there is some vast universal synthesis. Experience tells us that the nearer planets exert an influence on the weather, vegetation, etc.; one has only to proceed upwards by stages and there is no saying where this influence ceases. The astronomer is always coming upon disturbances of one planet by another; after all the philosopher

* To *Wallenstein*.

† *Wallensteins Lager*.

‡ On *Wallenstein*.

is inclined, obliged indeed, to presume an influence on what is most distant. So all that man with his presentiments has to do is to continue along this road and extend this influence to the moral sphere, to good and evil fortune. I am even disinclined to call this delusion a superstition, it is so close to our nature, and is as tolerable and excusable as any belief.

It occurs more often than one thinks and not only in certain centuries, but also in certain stages of life and even in certain natures. After all the late King of Prussia only hoped so much from 'Wallenstein' because he expected that this matter would be seriously treated here.

There is a certain amount of good for poetical purposes in the *modern superstitious belief in oracles* too. But it seems to me that the special kind which you have chosen is not the best. I would class it with anagrams, chronodistiches, devil's rhymes, that can be read backwards and forwards; its incurable dryness reminds me of that tasteless and pedantic family to which it evidently belongs. At first I was so carried away by your manner of treating the scene that I did not notice these qualities and they only occurred to me on reflection. And however much, with all my experience of the theatre, I try to think of a way, this business with letters of the alphabet cannot be shown clearly. The letters must be intertwined like Matthias's Ms; the Fs would have to be set in a circle, and however large one made them, they would be unrecognisable at a distance.

Those, then are my scruples, and I shall not add to them. I have consulted with Meyer, who thinks as I do. Now it is for you to choose the best from it all. My keenest wish is that your work may progress.*

I shall try to make the best use of my rather broken time until the New Year. The whole second part of the 'Propyläen' has now gone. Manuscripts for the third part are there and I have only half still to revise. I shall do my best to have it ready too in three weeks.

I have a special idea for the fourth part, and mean to tell you of it; altogether I think I shall arrange matters so as to leave the spring free for some larger work. And I hope soon, with your assistance, to make progress with the plans for my 'Chromatic'.

So that is the course of a foolish life of toil, like the 'Arabian Nights' where one tale dovetails into the other.

My hearty greetings to you, and remembrances to your dear wife.

* Schiller followed Goethe's advice.

Weimar,
19th December 1798.

I am returning Kant's 'Anthropology' with twofold thanks, as Mrs Voigt has deprived herself of the pleasure of reading it on my account. It is a work that must be especially welcome to anyone interested in the education of himself or others. By the way, I think it should never be read except in the spring when the blossom is out, to counteract the utter lack of any kind of consolation prevailing in most of the book. I read it while children were playing round me, and that made it tolerable; from its height of pure reason life seems all a grave illness and the world a madhouse.

Our old teacher Kant is as excellent, penetrating and delightful as ever, and yet there are many passages where the work seems limited, and more where it appears illiberal. A wise man ought not to use the word 'fool' so often, particularly as he himself finds arrogance so intolerable. He finds genius and talent nothing but irksome, dislikes poets, and, thank God, knows nothing of any other art. In a few cases he is pedantic; for instance he can't endure the idea of any mixture of the sanguine and the choleric temperament. I also find the word 'mixture' wrong, experience, however, teaches us that sanguine temperament intensified may gradually turn into the choleric. Besides the whole idea of separating the four temperaments is only a device to help the observer . . .

I can't judge from one hasty reading, but the work seems to me to lay too little stress on some aspects of human nature that deserve blame and on others that merit praise. I may say more about this later.

I come back to what I said at the start. Anyone interested in education can make use of the book to clear his ideas about certain human conditions. And he may bring about great good if love makes this knowledge in him a living and active force.

Weimar,
3rd March 1799.

Your letter arrived very late yesterday, and I am replying to-day, to renew this communication between us.

I am very pleased that this winter has been kind to you, since it has treated me so badly. There is no doubt that we have made

* After Goethe's return from Jena, where he had spent a few weeks.

progress together in more than one sense, and I hope the good season will put us in the mood to show this also in practice.

I find Körne's letter* strange just as all individuality is strange. No-one really understands either himself or others, so he is obliged to spin his own web to work from its centre. All this leads me back more and more to the poetical side of my nature. Poetic works most satisfy one's own self and they also afford the best contact with others.

I shall carry out a strict enquiry about 'Wallensteins Lager'. Your suspicion† seems to me to be only too well founded. In these splendid times, when reason extends its sublime rule, we can daily expect something infamous or absurd from even the worthiest.

I am carrying on my business and occupations here so as to free myself from them in the near future. By the way, I am in a very bad mood, which no doubt will not improve till I have been successful again with some work of importance.

My greetings to you, remember me to your dear wife and do work hard. As for me I see that I shall not have a contented hour till I find myself with you again and able to work in some pleasant way. I must invent something, whatever it may be, for the summer, that will give me back a certain cheerfulness I totally lack in the bad season.

314 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
16th March 1799.

My heartiest congratulations on the death of the theatrical hero!‡ I wish I could blow out the candle of my epic one§ before the autumn sets in. I am eagerly awaiting what you are sending on Monday, and I am arranging to come to you on Maundy Thursday. Even if we can spend only a week together we shall have got a good deal further on. We must leave April free for the performance of 'Wallenstein' and the visit of Madame Unzelmann. It would be well to hasten on as much as possible with 'Wallenstein', so as to offer a series of interesting performances by means of this tragedy and of this charming little woman's visit, and to retain the visitors who may perhaps come to stay here. My greetings to you. I have already thought out five cantos of the 'Achilleis' and have written

* About Humboldt's essay on *Herrmann und Dorothea*.

† That it was Böttiger who had somehow got hold of the manuscript of *Wallensteins Lager* and had sent it to Copenhagen.

‡ *Wallenstein*.

§ Achilles.

down 180 hexameters of the first canto. I have achieved it by very special resolution and diet, and as that has succeeded for the first part, one need have no fears for the rest. If you will help us with the Propyläen, this year shall not be lacking in much good work.

315 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
19th June 1799.

I admit that I find any waste of time more and more serious, and I am considering strange plans for rescuing some of the remaining months at least of this year for poetry—though I doubt whether anything will come of them. Outward circumstances form our existence and rob us of it at the same time, and yet one has to manage somehow, for isolating oneself completely as Wieland has done is not to be recommended either.

I hope you are making all possible progress with your work. At the beginning, when the idea is still new to us, everything always goes more briskly and better.

Whether I shall be able to come before the end of the month, I cannot tell. The Prince has come to stay with me and as we were anything but prepared for the visit of a King, things look somewhat in a turmoil.*

To avoid being quite idle I have turned out my little dark-room and mean to make some experiments and to repeat others, and in particular to see if I can find out anything from the so-called inflexion. Yesterday when I was with Meyer, I made a fine discovery. You have perhaps heard it said that on summer evenings certain flowers seem to sparkle or to shed a momentary light. I had never yet seen this phenomenon; yesterday evening we observed it quite distinctly with an oriental poppy which has a stronger yellow-red colour than any other flower. Closer examination showed however that the phenomenon is a physiological one, and that the apparent sparkle is the image of the flower itself in the very light green complementary colour. No flower manifests this phenomenon when seen from the front, but if you peer out of the corner of your eye, this momentary double image is obtained. It must be twilight, so that the eye is completely relaxed and receptive, but not so dim that the red colour loses any of its strength. I think one could

* The Hereditary Prince, as his apartments were to be used for the visit of the King and Queen of Prussia.

reconstruct this experiment very satisfactorily with coloured paper; I shall note the conditions exactly. The illusion really is most effective.

I enclose the 'Sammler', hoping that this fun, now it is all together will amuse you again. As you read it remember the happy hours when we invented him.

It is true that Vohs is trying to leave, but I shall appeal to the contract which has still two years to run.

My greetings, then, and make as good use as possible of the fortnight till we meet. I shall be content if I manage to achieve anything at all. In the meantime I have begun drinking the Pymont water. Remember me to your dear wife and recommend my Julie* to her.

316 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
22nd June 1799.

I am glad you have so much good to say of the 'Sammler'. You yourself know what share you have in its content and form; I am only afraid I had not enough time and ease for the actual writing, so I feared the whole thing might not have enough to recommend it. If one had had more leisure one could have coated the spicier ingredients in rather more syrup. But it may be, too, that this sketchy air suits the whole thing all the better. We ourselves have gained a great deal, we have learned something, we have amused ourselves, we are making a stir, and the current 'Propyläen'-number will certainly be read twice as much as the last ones. But the real advantage to us lies in the future. The basis is good, and I beg you to think very earnestly about it. Meyer is quite taken with the idea and we may expect some important results. I shall say no more of this for the present.

All modern artists belong to the class *Imperfects* and with that they more or less fall under the separate headings. Meyer for instance discovered only yesterday, to his great satisfaction, that Giulio Romano belongs to the *Sketchists*. Meyer could not really understand this artist's character in spite of his extensive study of him, but now, with this pronouncement he believes he has solved the entire problem. By calling Michael Angelo a *Phantasmist*, Correggio an *Undulist* and Raffael a *Characterist*, these terms are

* One of the characters in *Der Sammler und die Seinigen*.

lent enormous depth, because one contemplates these outstanding men in their limitations, and yet one is setting them up as kings or as lofty representatives of whole types. The Germans are and will always remain *Imitators*, and *Nebulists* do not exist in older art; but I expect Oeser will be cited as one of these. What is against our working out a continuation of the 'Sammmler', once we have given this matter more thought? This production will never fail to stimulate us, uniting as it does so truly the artistic demand of mingled earnestness and play.

But however this may be or turn out, the work on *Dilettantism* is bound to be much more extensive. It is of the greatest importance, and it will depend on circumstances and chance what final form it takes. I should very much like to give it some poetic form, to make its effect at once more general and more pleasing. For it is only now that we have thought this matter out so thoroughly and given the child a name that I realise how sunk in dilettantism are artists, patrons, sellers, buyers and lovers of art. We must work through our plans once more, very carefully indeed, to make certain of their whole content; and then we must wait to see if good fortune shows us some form in which we can present them. Some day, when we open the sluices, there will be some fierce arguments, for we shall be swamping the whole smiling valley where dilettante working has so happily settled. And as the chief characteristic of the dilettantes is their *incorrigibility*, and moreover those of our time are affected with a positively brutish conceit, they will wail that their property is being ruined, and once the flood is past, they will put everything back into its old state like ants after a downpour. But that will not help them, judgement must be passed on them. So let us allow our ponds to fill up well and all of a sudden pierce the dykes. Then there will be a stupendous Flood.

Yesterday we saw the new sheets of the Chalcographical Society. It is incredible how these people too are beginning to bungle their work, and the patrons' conceit equals their incomprehension. The choice of the work of art for their copperplate engraving is unfortunate in itself, the manner in which it is now to be reproduced wrongly selected. They do not of course realise either fact, and in cases where they cannot avoid seeing it, they help themselves out by praising their own economy, as inferior originals cost nothing.

Recently I had a visit from a poetical dilettante who would have driven me to despair, had I not been in the mood to observe him as a specimen in order to gain a really vivid notion of the breed.

That is enough for to-day. There is nothing for it, but for us to continue the way we have started along; let us honestly abide by that. I am putting my time to as good a use as I can, and at least am always advancing a few pieces on the chessboard. Do, then, the same till our next meeting, to which I am looking forward very much. My greetings to your dear wife and thank her for her interest in our latest work. I shall now see what fate the remaining day has in store for me.

317 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
31st July 1799.

How very pleasant that I can doubly congratulate you on your productions, at this moment when I am busy praising and recommending them. I hope that everything goes well in both cases.

I knew beforehand that Parny* would give you pleasure. He has chosen a number of very nice, clever themes from his material, and he presents them in a lively and agreeable way. But I do not consider him very happy in the disposition and gradation of the themes, and the whole lacks unity. It further seems to me that his apparent intention of dragging the Christian-Catholic religion through the dirt, is more obvious than it should be in a poet. I felt as if this little work might have been expressly commissioned by the *Theophilanthropists*. However, these and similar objects are more suited to comic epics than to serious ones.

'Paradise Lost', which came into my hands by chance the other day, has aroused strange reflections in me. In this poem, as in every modern work of art, it is really the individual manifesting itself which awakes our interest. The subject-matter is odious, outwardly plausible and inwardly worm-eaten and empty. Apart from the few themes that are natural and bold, a great section of it is so lame and erroneous that it grieves one. But of course, it is an interesting person who is speaking here; one cannot deny him character, feeling, intelligence, knowledge, poetic and oratorical gifts, and many other good qualities. The strange, unique fact that as an unsuccessful revolutionary he could take the part of the devil better than that of the angel, had a great influence on the design and composition of the poem, just as the circumstance of the poet's blindness has on its tone and colouring. The work will therefore always remain unique;

* Vicomte de Parny, *La Guerre des Dieux*, poëme en dix chants, Paris 1799.

and as I said, however much it lacks on the side of art, nature will always triumph here.

Among other reflections aroused by this work I was obliged to give thought to the subject of Free Will, about which I am not otherwise inclined to rack my brains. In this poem it has a poor role, as indeed it has in the whole Christian religion. For if one accepts the natural goodness of man, it follows at once that Free Will is simply the senseless faculty of choosing to deviate from the good and so to incur guilt. But if one accepts that man is naturally evil, or more specifically unconditionally governed by his appetites like the animals, then of course Free Will is a superior creature who presumes because of his nature to act against nature. One sees from this how Kant was naturally led to his conception of a radical evil, and how it is that the philosophers, who find man so full of natural charm, get into such a tangle on the subject of his freedom, and why they resist when one fails to appreciate the good done from inclination as highly as they do. But all this can be left for our personal discussion, as can Reinhold's explanations about Fichte's atheism.*

I have begun to read his Letter to Lavater on this subject. What Reinhold says seems to me psychologically most instructive and amounts, I would say, to the old thesis: that each of us creates his own kind of God and that no one can or ought to deprive him of it.

To avoid my noisy neighbours on every side, I have decided to move into my garden to wait there for the arrival of the Duke and Privy Councillor Voigt, who I hope will relieve me of my present post.

Time will have to show if the solitude of the Ilm valley can contribute much to the one thing needful.

My greetings to you, and remember me to your dear wife. Our next meeting will be all the more pleasant, the more it has so far been prevented. For in the meantime we have both again experienced a number of things which it will be extremely interesting to relate.

318 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
3rd August 1799.

I am making use of my solitude in the garden above all to put into groups my little poems which Unger now wants for the seventh

* Reinhold, *Sendschreiben an Lavater und Fichte über den Glauben an Gott*, 1799.

volume, and to have a copy made. This kind of editing requires concentration, composure and a certain general mood. If I now could write a few dozen new poems to fill certain gaps and to add to certain sections which are scanty, it might all form quite an interesting whole. But if I cannot find time to give the public anything new, at least I can act honestly towards myself and realise what I ought to do, even if I cannot do it at this moment. It provides guiding hints pointing the way for the future.

Milton's 'Paradise Lost' which I am reading in the afternoons serves me with material for many reflections of which I should like to tell you soon. The chief fault he has made, once having chosen his material, is that all the personages, gods, angels, devils, men, whom he introduces, are as it were unrestricted, and then—so as to make them act—he is in some cases obliged to restrict their [Free Will] from time to time. He usually tries to justify himself, as he does this, in a way that is skillful but in most cases also more or less ingenious. Yet it is true, of course, that the poet is an excellent and altogether interesting man, whose mind can attain the sublime, and it is noticeable that the bad taste of his subject rather helps than hinders him, and is even a great advantage with readers who have swallowed the whole story in good faith.

There are many other things, too, about which I am saying nothing because this letter must go to town. I would rather not say when I may come, for I cannot decide it precisely yet. So do not be put off from your little journey. My greetings to you and remember me to your dear wife.

319 To SCHILLER

*Weimar, in the garden,
21st August 1799.*

My quiet life here in the garden continues to yield good if not abundant fruit.

I have been busy studying Winckelmann's life and writings; I must try to understand the merit and influence of this worthy man in detail.

I am going on grouping and correcting my shorter poems. Here too everything depends on the guiding principle. Now that I approve the principle of a stricter metre, it helps rather than hinders me. Many points have still to be cleared up of course. Voss would already have done us a great service ten years ago if he had ex-

pressed himself a little less cryptically on this point in his introduction to the 'Georgics'.

I have been staying up unusually late this week, till midnight, to wait for the moon, which I study through Auch's telescope with great interest. It is a very enjoyable feeling to get this closer, better view of something about which till recently little or nothing was known. Schroeter's fine work, the 'Selenotopography' is a guide that considerably shortens one's way. And the vast silence of the night out here in the garden has its charm too, particularly as no sound wakes one in the morning. With a little practice I might qualify to enter the Society of the worthy Lucifuges.*

I have just received your letter. The new tragic theme you mention seems at first sight to have many good points, and I shall give further thought to it.† There is no doubt it is easier for the poet if he himself supplies the content and treatment, and history merely the simple facts and bare theme; this is better for him than if he tries to make use of the more detailed and complex elements in history, when the detail in the situation draws him away from what is common to all men, and poetry soon finds itself in great straits.

There has been only one entry for the drawing competition which is worth considering and has commendable qualities; some others are beneath any kind of criticism and remind one of the German rabble worked up by that riddle.

As for the 'Almanach' we must just live from day to day now and do what we can. The third canto,‡ which I went through with the ladies, is now at the printers' and we shall try to help on the fourth. There is still no doubt that there is something to be said for the plan of the poem and much that is good about it, but in the execution it lags far behind what it ought to be, although a great deal has been done to it since you saw it.

Frau von Kalb really is removing her effects and so these quarters will be empty. But they can only be given, of course, to someone renting them for the whole year. However, one would have to come to a decision and we of the theatre would have every reason to make your journey easier for you.

Bergrat Scherer who is meaning to marry is hoping to get it, I hear; should this change take place, then the top floor in the

* Cockroaches, called *lucifugae* by Vergil.

† *Warbeck*; this tragedy was never written.

‡ Of *Die Schwestern von Lebos* by Amalie von Helvig-Imhoff.

Wolzogens' house would be empty, and your family could stay there. You would be given Thouret's rooms, and if you were here at the same time as he was, we should be able to find him other quarters. All this has to be thought and talked over till one is forced to take some decision. So farewell for to-day; my greetings to your dear wife.

320 To J. G. SCHLOSSER *

Weimar,
30th August 1799.

My dear brother, it was very kind of you to give me a detailed description of your new garden. It seems to look quite different from your first, over-modest mention of it. You have a great deal of space still to lay out, so you can use a good many [seeds and plants], and I shall be glad to do what I can from here . . .

I hope good Mme La Roche gets home again safely and without any accident. It will have been a pretty good expedition for her age. Her relationship to Wieland is really something unique; and it is strange and charming for them to be meeting again after so many years and both fairly active in mind and body. One might say, too, that each of them is a unique creature. Among such eminent people I don't believe there is a more blameless pair.

I congratulate you on having found your boy a suitable companion so near home. Try if possible to let them mix with others too. There's nothing like that for showing us what we can, would, may and ought to do.

I can well imagine how lonely you must feel in big Frankfort; our little circle here—especially if you count in Jena too—is a real fairy tale in comparison. There are numbers of interesting people here living so close to one another; I wish I could even sketch them in outline for you. As you can imagine this mass is in a continual state of ferment and conflict; it's fascinating to watch and also maybe take part in it either sensibly or passionately . . .

We have not forgotten you here, and everyone will be glad to be remembered by you.

About Fichte, I am still very sorry we had to lose him [on this charge of atheism], and that his foolish presumption then thrust him out of a life here such as he won't find again in the whole wide world—however odd this high-sounding phrase may seem. The older one grows, the more one values nature's gifts, because they

* Goethe's brother-in-law.

cannot possibly be acquired. Fichte is certainly one of the most outstanding brains; but I fear he is lost both to himself and to the world. His present situation is bound to add bitterness to his other oddities. It may not seem very important, but it is a good thing that the Courts have been able to take a step in this matter that from one point of view can be approved and from the other at least cannot be blamed; you know to what extremes Fichte's insolent selfishness had gone. And I don't mind admitting I would vote against my own son if he dared use expressions like that against a Government.

Farewell; and, as I said, let us keep up a fairly live correspondence for the present, so that we can be together in moments of leisure from your affairs. Once everything is under way, our correspondence can be more leisurely, and I hope we'll keep up that pleasant pace to the end of our days.

321 To J. G. STEINHAUSER

*Jena,
17th September 1799.*

As magnetic phenomena have been interesting me greatly for some time, I am anxious to establish a connection with a man of such outstanding attainment as yours in this field. May I, therefore, take the liberty of putting the following questions to you:

How can one get a magnetic magazine constructed like the one in your possession mentioned in Scherer's 'Journal'? And what would the cost be? . . .

What would constitute at the present time a complete magnetic equipment with nothing superfluous about it or like a toy? I possess a number of items, but I wish to complete my equipment.

322 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Jena,
3rd October 1799.*

I'm staying away from you so long, I must write you a page myself to tell you I love you tenderly and am always thinking of you and our dear little boy. I was very busy the first fortnight, but only over separate things which weren't very important. Then I settled down to something that began well. You've heard me mention his Highness wanted a French tragedy translated and I could never get on with it. Now at last I've got the right approach

and the work, [Voltaire's 'Mahomet'], is going well. If I do my utmost I shall have finished by the 12th and I mean to leave on the 13th. So I've got something interesting to do in the dull winter days, finishing off the play and getting it produced. And then we can sit and see it together . . .

Frau Trabitus is bleaching your cotton in the yard; she's tied it twice round with red, because it's finer than the other skeins and she doesn't want to mix it up.

I'll soon be back with you and then we'll have some good times together.

As for other people, be as kind to them as you can, without expecting their thanks. It leads to a good deal of annoyance in some cases, but on the whole it makes for a good relationship.

Good-bye. Love me always; my heart is always with you and the child. The very best thing in the world is to be at ease with oneself and one's nearest.

323 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
23rd December 1799.

I think you ought to decide to come to me in any case, at half past eight. You will find rooms that are well heated and lit, probably a few friends still here, a cold supper and a glass of punch. All of them things not to be despised in these long winter nights.

324 To PRINCE AUGUST OF GOTHA

Weimar,
3rd January 1800.

You have given me such particular pleasure, my dear Prince, with your last letter at the close of the year, that I should like to thank you very much for it and for this opportunity to write again. At this beginning of a year, indeed a century, let me express my unalterable affection and respect and my sincerest wishes for your well-being, in which I do not lose interest though for long periods I may be silent.

A stone falls faster the longer it falls, and life seems to move in much the same way; mine seems tranquil enough outwardly, but it is swept on with increasing force. In past years I have taken up many threads, in sciences, arts and affairs, and now these are running closer and closer, crossing and pressing on each other;

indeed it needs all my habits of order to prevent them from getting entangled.

My Prince has urged me besides to translate Voltaire's 'Mahomet', strange as this enterprise may seem to many. My debt to him is boundless, for I owe him my life here, which is all I could wish and even more. And with my odd nature that is saying a good deal. So I considered it my duty to carry out his wishes as well as I could.

Monday's coach will bring you a copy of the play. You, my dear Prince, know all the intricacies of both languages, so who could be a better judge if I have been at all successful in my work?

May I request you not to part with the copy and to return it at your convenience. And should you also send your views on it as a whole and any remarks on the detail, you would be adding a new kindness to all the good I already owe you . . .

Accept my sincere respects, my dear Prince, and pray continue in your kind feelings for me. And may one of my liveliest wishes for this new year be fulfilled, namely that it may bring me another visit to Gotha and with it the experience that my honoured patrons and friends there are still of the same mind towards me.

Let me conclude with a thousand greetings.

325 To WILHELM VON HUMBOLDT

*Weimar,
4th January 1800.*

Your welcome letter from Madrid arrived some weeks ago, and I am writing without further delay, though I haven't much of importance to send you in return.

Your last letter has done for me what I said it would; I find your going to Spain is almost as good for me as going there myself. I enjoyed following you across France and seeing you in the Pyrenees. I remembered among my books one I had never looked at, a mineralogical journey through this interesting region, by a certain La Peyrouse. I found detailed maps in it, mineralogical observations and much else of interest to a traveller. Also sketches of sections of mountains . . .

I have been looking through some other travel-books, too, with considerable interest. I have nailed up a map of Spain on my door, and so I go with you in thoughts, and hope you will lead me on and on.

I have even taken to reading Spanish authors again, and recently enjoyed Cervantes' 'Numancia'.

We shall be glad of whatever you send us or whatever your dear companion saves up for us . . .

326 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
11th February 1800.

Should you care to come to see me in this severe cold, I should be glad if you could come at six so that we can get 'Macbeth' read and off.

At seven, when the moon rises, you are invited to an astronomical party to observe the moon and Saturn, for there are three telescopes in my house this evening.

But if you prefer a warm room, our friend Meyer will bear you company. He pursues the mountains on the moon as well as the Swiss ones, and the heavenly bodies as well as the cold, with the hearty hatred of the artist.

327 To SCHILLER

Leipzig,
4th May 1800.

I enjoy this contrast to my long solitude in Weimar; I intend to stay on here next week. A Fair like this is the world in a nutshell, where one really sees man's handicraft—all based on mechanical skill. It is rather like the instinct of some animal, there's so little 'intelligence' in it.

It is safe to say that there is not a trace of what one calls 'art' in all that is produced to-day.

There are quite a number of good things among the pictures, prints and the like, but they are all older ones. There is at Bausen's an extraordinarily striking portrait by a painter now living in Hamburg; here the departing spirit seems to have whipped up the material of art, and this is the last remaining bubble; a cloud for Juno.

I wished you had seen even one performance in the theatre. Naturalism and casual, thoughtless behaviour both in the whole and in the details, can surely go no further. Not a trace of art or decorum. A lady from Vienna said very aptly that the actors never once behaved as though there were any spectators. In the way most of them spoke their parts one couldn't detect the faintest intention of being understood. They constantly turned away and spoke to the back of the stage, and they went on in this so-called

natural manner until at important passages they plunged suddenly into the most exaggerated mannerism.

On the other hand the audience, to give it its due, is extremely attentive. There is no preference for any single actor, and indeed it would be hard to feel one. Often there is applause for the author or rather for his plot; as a rule the actor is only loudly clapped if he overacts. As you see, these are all symptoms of an audience that is unspoilt but uneducated too, the sort that a Fair sweeps together. Farewell and remember me. More when we meet.

328 To CHRISTIANE VULPIUS

*Leipzig,
5th May 1800.*

Legationsrat Bertuch has brought me the parcel and you will have got the letter I was able to send off yesterday.

There's all the more reason for us to keep to your coming to fetch me, seeing August can't come with your brother. Just tell me when you would like to arrive; the coachman can let you know about the journey to the nearest hour.

You and the child will both enjoy seeing Leipzig at this lovely time of year; the walks around the town are as beautiful as one could wish.

You'll be amazed at the so-called panorama where you see the whole of London spread out, as if from the top of a tower; it's most remarkable.

The theatre isn't worth much, but you must see it just for the sake of comparison. There's a great deal else and you'll enjoy all the different things that are for sale—I can see already we shan't get away without some buying. It may save you going to the Naumburg Fair.

I'll leave it to you whether you use our carriage or the coachman's from whom you hire the horses. But it would be a good thing for it to look smart, for going out driving here one wants to look fairly elegant.

Don't bring anything but white dresses; hardly anything else is worn here. You can buy a little hat as soon as you get here.

Bring a reasonably-sized trunk to hold my things too. Do anything else you think useful as well.

It might be best for you to arrive on Saturday for a Sunday in Fair-time is very gay; everybody rides and drives out in their best

clothes. We could get our little business done in a couple of days, leave on Tuesday afternoon and be in Weimar on Wednesday. Anyway count on six days, including the journey here and back and we can arrange the rest.

Write to me about it by the post leaving on Thursday.

In any case drive to the Hotel de Baviere and I'll see to the rooms.

Farewell; remember me very kindly to Professor Meyer and to Bury, and I am glad he liked the green cloth. Kiss our dear child and don't tell him till the moment of starting that he is off to Leipzig.

329 To SCHILLER

Jena,
29th July 1800.

My work is going forward; in the mornings I write in pencil as much as I can of my translation [of Voltaire's 'Tancred'], and then dictate it in moments of leisure. This will make the first manuscript fairly neat. I shall have finished the last three acts by the end of the week and shall keep the first two for a new spurt. I am saying nothing about it, but we'll find it useful for our purposes. It is really a 'show-piece', for everything in it is put up for show, and being less hampered than the Frenchman, I can stress this characteristic of the play even more. It is suited and calculated to be effective on the stage and cannot fail to be so. The play with its setting and action all in public absolutely demands choruses. I will arrange for these too, and hope to go as far in this way as the nature of the work and its typically French structure will allow. It will lead to useful new experiences for us.

I spend about four hours a day at this work, and the following summary will give you an idea how varied and often amusing my occupations are for the rest of the time.

Short Summary of the Gifts I have received from the following for my entertainment as well as for nourishment of body and mind in this emporium of Learning and Science:

Loder gave:

magnificent crabs—I wished you had a plate of them,
excellent wines,
a foot to be dissected,
a polypus of the nose,
some anatomical and surgical articles,

various anecdotes,
a microscope and journals;

Frommann:

Gries's 'Tasso',
the first part of Tieck's Journal;

Friedrich Schlegel:

one of his poems,
proof-sheets of the 'Atheneum';

Lenz:

new minerals, especially some very fine crystallised
chalcedony;

The Mineralogical Society:

some essays of a lofty or commonplace nature,
opportunity for all kind of observation;

Ilgen:

the 'Story of Tobi',
various amusing philological items;

The 'Botanic' Gardener:

many plants according to the order in which they grow
and flower here in the Garden;

Cotta:

Philibert's 'Botany';

Chance:

Brentano's 'Gustav Wasa';

Literary Discussion:

the wish to read Steffen's little work on mineralogy;

Count Veltheim:

his collected works, witty, and amusing, but unfortunately
frivolous and amateurish and sometimes cowardly and
fantastic;

Various occupations:

opportunity to amuse myself and to be annoyed.

And lastly I mustn't forget 'Memnon' [that periodical you sent me], which certainly ought to be counted among the remarkable phenomena and signs of the times.

With all these ghosts haunting me at once, you can well imagine that I am never alone, either in my room or on my solitary walks. For the next few days I have the most extraordinary medley of

things in prospect; more of this by the next messenger. I shall be able then to fix the day of my return.

I hope you are well and busy and that this high barometric pressure suits you as well as me.

330 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
12th August 1800.

If you would care to accompany me to-day to Counsellor Bertuch's, I shall fetch you in the carriage at one o'clock.

Here is a copy of the poems for your dear wife; but she is not to have it bound till I have talked to her about it; for the wrinkles in the 'Wallenstein', which you blame on Herr Frommann and his machine, come from the binding and are avoidable, as I shall explain.

I hope you are feeling better to-day than yesterday, though the barometer still stands in my favour.

331 To SCHILLER

Jena,
23rd September 1800.

Your recent visit was a great pleasure to me; our conversation and Meyer's reading have given me courage to despatch the first instalment at once.* Letters, money and notice have already gone. The critic is being copied and I am thinking about my *introit*, which I hope, your peroration will soon launch.

My 'Helena' has made some progress too these days. The chief points in this scheme are now arranged, and as in the main I have your approval, I can set to work on carrying it out with all the greater confidence.

I like in this instance to hold myself in check and not to look into the distance; but I can already see that a proper survey of the whole can only be had from this summit.

I hope to hear from you too that you are getting on.

To avoid adding to the curse of the wives that is already weighing on me, I shall not encourage you to come here. Of course, if the weather should change, you would have little pleasure in the garden.

My greetings to Meyer; I am not writing to him to-day.

* Papers referring to the art-competition.

The philosophical 'Colloquia' grow more and more interesting, and I can hope that if I only take time, I shall understand the whole very well. We shall do all we can to enter in the new century with this *third wonder*.

My greetings to you, and remember me.

332 To SCHELLING

Jena,
27th September 1800.

The second number of your journal has reached me and I found much in it that is pleasantly instructive and stimulating. If you had ended the number with the charming poetic fragment, you would have left us with a pleasure that was quite unmixed.

The general observations on pp. 22ff agree with my own convictions and also add to them. I hope to come gradually to understand your theory in detail too.

Since I had to tear myself away from the traditional ways of natural philosophy, I have been thrown like a monad upon my own resources; that left me swaying to and fro in the subtler regions of thought and I have seldom felt myself drawn in a particular direction; but your theory definitely attracts me. Now I want to reach complete agreement with you, and hope to do so some day by studying your writings, or better still by personal discussion with you and by developing and generalising my own particular opinions. The more slowly I proceed and the more I am obliged to adhere faithfully to my own way of thinking, the more perfect will be this agreement . . .

My regards to Herr Schlegel, and if the little picture of Hans Sachs is to be had at a reasonable price, I should be very glad to have it.

333 To SCHILLER

Jena,
18th November 1800.

I really do not know where poor Poetry is to flee next. Here she is again in danger of being driven into a corner by philosophers, scientists, and company. I cannot, of course, deny that I myself invite and encourage these gentlemen, and that of my own free will I yield to the bad habit of theorising, so I have only myself to blame. However some very good things are being brought to mind

in a very good way, and I am spending my time quite pleasantly.

Loder hopes to see you on Thursday; I hear that Privy Councillor Voigt is eager too, and perhaps you will come together, bringing Meyer with you. But tell me more about this by the messenger so that we can be making our arrangements.

When you come to us you will find a great deal of enthusiasm for the *Festum Saeculare*; they really have had a number of good ideas that might be carried out.

I have found several good themes for my 'Helena', and if during my stay here I could get rid of a dozen or so letters I owe, something will be gained there too.

I wish the same to you for everything you are doing.

334 To SCHILLER

Jena,
22nd December 1800.

The enclosed charming little book* will no doubt already be current among you; if not, do keep it for a few days, it undeniably contains some brilliant passages.

I have at least three days' work to get my knights† finished off. Tragic woe has pressed hard upon me in these past days, and I could have been finished and with you again long ago had I not taken on obligations towards Iffland. For I am delayed by always having to correct everything carefully at once, having it copied out and looking it through again. You know the sort of business. On the other hand it is a good thing, once one is in the middle of it, to get the work finished, and we need it, too, for the beginning of the year. I had really lingered with it too long already, and there was still too much to do for a single sudden rush such as I make. It is incredible, the threads in a thing like that, till one sets to work oneself to unravel them again.

That is my confession, then, for the past week. I hope you too have a number of things, and better things, to tell me.

I have continued my solitary existence; I have been out walking once only, on the finest day. Friedrich Schlegel, Harbauer and Niethammer have been to see me.

I shall bring Schelling with me on Friday so as to have a good reserve for our *Saecular-Empirie*.

* A satire on Kotzebue by A. W. Schlegel.

† *Tancred*, the tragedy by Voltaire which Goethe was translating.

By the way, I have been reading a great deal, to make use of the long evenings. My greetings to you; I am longing for the evenings with you again.

335 To REICHARDT*

*Weimar,
5th February 1801.*

It is not everyone who gains as much from his travels as I have done from my short absence.

When I returned from the boundary of death's kingdom—so near and so far—many sympathisers were here to greet me. Their presence gave me the flattering assurance of having lived for others also and not for myself alone. Not only friends and acquaintances, strangers and estranged too showed me that they wished me well. My re-entry into life thus brought me the happiness of starting anew, free from any aversion—just as children are born with no knowledge of hatred, their earliest years happy in being a time of liking rather than disliking. Tell yourself with words as affectionate as your own to me what pleasure your letter was therefore bound to give me. Such an old, firmly established relationship as ours, is like kinship, only interrupted by events outside the normal order. It is all the more gratifying, then, when nature and one's own convictions restore it.

I have little to say of what I have suffered. My illness seized me shortly after New Year, not quite without warning. It attacked me in so many strange forms that even the most experienced doctors doubted for a while if I would recover. This condition lasted for nine days and nights of which I remember very little. The most fortunate circumstance was that the moment consciousness returned, I was quite myself again . . .

The first higher need I felt after my illness was the need for music; and as far as circumstances would allow they tried to satisfy it. Do send me your latest compositions, and then I'll have a festive evening with some friends.

Please give my grateful regards to my Berlin well-wishers and sympathisers, known and unknown. My greatest wish is to live in future too to be agreeable and useful to the many friends who set such store by my life.

* The composer, with whom Goethe had been out of touch for some time owing to their differing political opinions.

My thanks once again for drawing nearer to me at this time; my best wishes for your continued good health.

336 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
11th February 1801.

I welcome this reading* with great pleasure, all the greater because I was going to beg you to let me know at least the general scheme of the work from the beginning. But I cannot drive out to-day, for this morning Starke undertook a somewhat painful but I trust final operation on my eye, and he has forbidden me to go out in the cold. So I am sending you the carriage at half past five, and you will be able to drive home too after dinner. I am confident a great deal of good will come from this reading, both for your progress and for my own work.

337 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
14th March 1801.

First of all let me congratulate you heartily that your work is going so well; I have done something at my 'Faust' too; one moves on all the time, though slowly.

Hartmann's stay here is perhaps more useful to us than to him himself, for we are getting to know an excellent man's not quite perfected manner of thinking. By the way, I sometimes think that for matters of art one really ought to found a secret society in which the amusing thing would be that a great many artists would not be able to graduate to the highest honours and even the best qualified would not have to be *given* these honours; he would simply be told when at last he attained them. Speaking, writing and publishing would be of some use, but not much; we however shall not regret doing so.

We encouraged Hartmann at once to compose a picture while he was here, something indeed where the subject offered him resistance: Admetus, who in spite of the corpse in his home admits and entertains Hercules. You shall hear later how we came upon this subject, it is too long to explain in writing.

My good wishes for you, whether alone or in academic company, and do not forget us.

* Of Schiller's new tragedy *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.

My best wishes for your return to Weimar; I hope to see you again soon, out here or when I come back to town.

My stay here is suiting me very well, because I am out of doors the whole day and because of the simplifying effect on me of ordinary everyday things; all this brings me a certain ease and indifference which I had lacked for some time.

As for the questions in your letter, I not only share your view, I would even go further. I hold that whatever genius does as genius is done unconsciously. The man of genius can act according to reason when convinced by reflection, but all that is incidental. No work of genius can be improved or freed from its faults by reflection and its immediate results. But reflection and action may so improve a man of genius that he ends by producing exemplary works. The more the age itself possesses genius, the better for the individual.

I agree with you that the great demands now made on the poet are unlikely to create one. Poetry requires of the man who is to write it a sort of limitation full of kindly love of reality; the Absolute lies hidden behind it. Demands from outside destroy this innocent and productive state, and by sheer poetising put in the place of poetry something that quite definitely is *not* poetry. Alas, we see this only too well to-day. And the same is true of the sister-arts, indeed of art in the widest sense.

This is my creed, which, I may add, makes no further claims.

I hope for great good from your newest work.* It is well conceived, and if you give yourself enough leisure, it will round itself off. I have written some more to 'Faust' lately. I hope that only the disputation-scene will be lacking in the great gap and that, of course, may be regarded as a separate work and will not come to me in a flash.

Nor have I overlooked the capital competition.† In order to acquire a practical basis for my observations I have begun to form a notion of the European nations. Following on Link's 'Journey' I have been reading a good deal about Portugal, and shall progress to Spain now. I see every day more clearly how greatly everything

* *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.

† Zenobio, an Italian Count, had sent Goethe a considerable sum of money as prize for a competition regarding the *different stages of civilisation*; nothing however came of it and three years later Goethe had to return the money to Zenobio.

becomes simplified if one tries to read observations like these, as it were, from their own standpoint.

Ritter was here for a moment and led my thoughts to the theory of colour too. Herschel's new discoveries which our young scientists have continued and extended, fit well with the observation I have often told you of: that the *Bononian* Stones do not take up any light at the red end of the spectrum, though they do so at the violet end. The physical colours thus show themselves identical with the chemical ones. My industry which I have not spared in this matter, is a great advantage to me in judging the new observations, and I have at once thought out some new experiments which go further along the same lines. I foresee that I shall be writing at least a few more chapters of my 'Theory of Colour' this year. I hope soon to read the newest one to you.

Would you like to come to me with Professor Meyer on Thursday? Discuss it with him; I have written to him more about it. Meanwhile my greetings to you.

339 To T. HOLCROFT*

Jena,
29th May 1801.

Honoured Sir, I am returning with many thanks your translation of my 'Herrmann und Dorothea'. Allow me to add a few observations.

It seems to me that there are two principles of translation. The translator can bring to his fellow-countrymen a true and clear picture of the foreign author and foreign circumstances, keeping strictly to the original. But he can also treat the foreign work as a writer treats his material, altering it after his own tastes and convictions, so that it is brought closer to his fellow-countrymen, who can then accept it as if it were an original work.

You seem to have adopted the latter method. You have retained the general course of my poem. But as far as I can judge you have rendered the casual, though dramatically characteristic remarks of my personages in a more earnest, obvious, and didactic way. The result is that you have altered the leisurely epic movement of the poem to a more solemn, measured pace.

I have little knowledge of English literature but I suppose that in doing this you had the character of your countrymen in

* English writer, at Hamburg.

mind. I should be very pleased, therefore, to see a full discussion of this point in the Preface and Notes you mean to add to your work . . .

340 To F. J. BERTUCH

Weimar,
12th January 1802.

When I sent you a friendly request to forward to me in future, before printing, theatre reviews [for your 'Modejournal'], I already had a notion what to expect from a scoundrel like your theatrical critic [Böttiger]. Now you send me his article [on the performance of Schlegel's 'Ion'] half-printed. All I can say is, if you yourself are not prepared to put the matter right and suppress this review, I shall go at once to his Highness the Duke and bring the whole thing to a head. For I mean either to resign from the theatre at once or to be secure in future from calumnies like this. This ever-busy caricaturist may practise his art in the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' or wherever he wants, but in Weimar I shall not permit it over matters in which I have some public standing. Up to four o'clock I am prepared to receive your explanations; on the stroke of that hour my communication will be sent off to his Highness the Duke.

341 To WIELAND*

Weimar,
12th January 1802.

I have to overcome some reluctance, my dear old friend, in drawing your attention to something that may have unpleasant consequences for both of us.

It was to be expected that 'Herr Ubique's' partisan spirit should prepare to take wing at the sight of 'Ion'. At the first performance this 'tiger-ape' was running about the floor of the theatre, making pedantic remarks aimed at spoiling one's enjoyment of a performance such as Weimar has never seen. Finding he didn't succeed, he put a report on it into the 'Modejournal', grossly offensive to the theatre-management. Bertuch, however, returned from Rudolstadt in time to take it out again.

It seems that this malicious creature indulges all the more confidently in his rage because he has before him certain criticisms based purely on the story of the play. You will have no difficulty in

* Also about Böttiger's critique.

assessing these, as only too often you have met with this problematic *argumentum fabulae*.

As the way to the 'Modejournal' is blocked for him and he seems bent this time on bringing the thing to a head, I don't want him to use your 'Mercur' to vent his foul spleen. Let him use papers published elsewhere if he wants!

I have overlooked a great deal in the past, but things are really going too far, so he will find me up in arms. But I don't want to find a loved and honoured name held as a charm against me when I attack this scoundrel.

Forgive an old friend telling you this; I had to conquer my taciturn habits to do so, but by a word or two earlier on, I might have saved you and others a good deal of annoyance.

I hope to see you here soon and to lay the *corpus delicti* before you; I don't want to defend it, my only concern with it has been to take the trouble to arrange for its performance. I have undertaken this office at my Prince's direction and with no small sacrifice on my own part and I have a right to expect reasonable consideration from my fellow-citizens.

Farewell once again. I do hope you will soon bring yourself to exchange the mild company of the Muses for stone-cold Weimar.

342 To C. G. VOIGT

Jena,
22nd January 1802.

Koch had Büttner's* rooms opened yesterday, to take charge of some things during repairs, and I went with him. I assure you it would defy the nimblest tongue and the ablest pen to describe the state of the rooms. They seemed a receptacle for books and papers, not a person's home at all. His literary treasures lay about everywhere, in some degree of order, or at random, or jumbled hopelessly together on tables, chairs, trunks, in cupboards, on beds. There were various bits of lumber, notably some old dulcimers and barrel-organs; everything under a coating of dust. There was a ludicrous assortment of old clothes; this was left to Trabitius, to his special delight. The ceiling, walls, floor and stove in the living-room were all equally black, and several boards were rotting through damp-

* In 1783 Goethe had come to an agreement with Professor Büttner of Göttingen by which the latter arranged for his valuable library to be incorporated after his death in that of Jena University, while he in return was granted a life annuity and the use of rooms in the castle of Jena.

ness and under layers of animal filth. There will be a good deal of work for the broom before military smartness can clear up this literary pigsty. It was only when I saw it that I realised how much his Highness has embarrassed his humble servants by his speedy bestowal of these rooms [to the Commandant of Jena] . . .

Would you believe that while the old man was here, he accumulated from six to eight thousand volumes that we knew practically nothing about. They were not entered in the catalogue but just piled up here. We found a few unopened cases that had come from auctions.

I mean to get everything under way for the great project of a general catalogue for practical purposes. It is a great undertaking, I admit, and it all depends on the personality of Dr Ersch. The University as a whole seems willing to help; and the Medical Faculty has already voted an advance of 400 thaler from its library funds . . .

I shall make enquiries about Professor Walther.

My best wishes for your recovery and kind regards.

343 To SCHILLER

*Jena,**

19th February 1802.

I shall not be able to accept your invitation this time, my dear friend. I must at once spin and lift off the distaff I have wound, or there will be fresh confusion and what has been done will have to be done again. I shall say farewell in writing to our good Prince. Convey my hearty greetings to Herr von Wolzogen and wish him a happy journey.

My stay here is quite pleasing; there have even been some signs of poetry, and I have achieved a few more songs to familiar tunes. I was very pleased to hear that you too are introducing something of the kind into the little circle.

I have spent a most satisfying evening with Schelling. Great clarity combined with great depth always gives pleasure. I would see him more often but that I hope for poetic moments and philosophy destroys poetry with me, I suppose because it impels me towards the object; I can never sustain a purely speculative level; for every proposition I must have perception, and so at once take refuge in nature again.

* Where Goethe was staying to reorganise the University Library.

I have also had an agreeable discussion with Paulus who showed me the Third Part of his Commentary on the New Testament. He is so fundamentally well informed in this field, so much at home in that place and time, that a great deal of the Scriptures which one is otherwise accustomed to admire in their abstractedness now seems understandable in a specific and individual present. By his totality of conception he has very pleasantly resolved some of my doubts so that I was able most cheerfully to agree with him. And a great many principles fundamental to a work of that kind can satisfyingly be explained in discussion; besides after all one always welcomes an individual embracing within himself such a totality of ideas.

I have now read 'Gita Govinda' in English and I am sorry to say I must accuse our good Dalberg of inept trash. Jones says in his introduction that he first of all made a literal translation of this poem and then omitted what seemed to him too lascivious and too bold for his nation. And now the German translator not only again omits what seems to him suspect along those lines, he also fails to understand very fine, innocent passages and translates them wrongly. Perhaps I shall make a translation of the end, which chiefly has been withered by this German blight, so that the old poet can at least appear before you in whatever beauty the English Translator could leave to him.

That is all for to-day. I shall only add that there is talk here of your selling your garden. There are doubts if you will obtain what you want for it; but we must hope the best. I shall fetch the keys from Hufeland if necessary. A friendly farewell.

344 To SCHILLER

*Jena,
4th May 1802.*

First of all my sincere wishes that your move to new quarters may have gone off smoothly. I shall have very great pleasure in seeing you well and active in new and friendly quarters facing the sun and the open.

And now, I should like to hear from you something about our theatrical affairs. What do you augur for 'Iphigenie', which, as could be foreseen, is somewhat delayed? What do you think of Madame Bürger? I should have liked to have waited to see her appearance myself.

In arranging the library, the ways of the people of Jena, which could almost be compared to the Italians *heavenly idleness*, thwart me to my annoyance. Let me proffer the observation that work done to a prescribed timetable, within a given time, produces and trains men who also do only the barest minimum by the hour and as it were hourwise. I shall stay here as long as possible because I am convinced that, as soon as I leave, the whole thing will come more or less to a halt again.

As for myself, however, and what concerns me nearly, I am getting on with a number of things quite well. Some lyrical poems have made their appearance again, and I have been studying the first sources of nordic mythology on these quiet evenings, because I happened to come upon them; and I think I am more or less clear about them now. I shall give proof of this when I come to you again. In a field like this too it is a good thing to knock in a stake and set up a post from which to take one's bearings occasionally.

Library work like this attracts us others, even if we give only a few minutes' glance into the books. I am noticing very favourable effects from my studies in physics, geognosy and natural history. All descriptions of travels are to me like looking into my own palm.

I need not mention to you that the countryside here at this blossom-time is extraordinarily beautiful; a view from your upper garden-room, which I hear you have lent to a philosopher, would be most refreshing.

My greetings to you and write a word to me.

P.S. That Loder is taking his father-in-law, wife and child to Warsaw, that our friend Frau Paulus's illness has resolved itself into a healthy boy—I hardly think these are items of news to you.

345 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
19th December 1802.

Things are not going well with us here, as perhaps you saw when we met yesterday at the Opera. I fear the newcomer will not stay long with us; and the mother, resigned as she generally is, suffers in mind and body. She sends you her best respects; she appreciates your kind thoughts very much.

I hope, however, to come this evening, so that the presence of friends may fill the emptiness within me.*

* The child born mid-December died on the 21st.

Weimar,
25th April 1803.

The little collection of coins you sent by Herr von der Beck arrived at a very opportune moment. It brightened several dull hours and made the meeting of our little society of coin-enthusiasts an instructive and happy one. My most hearty thanks to the gentleman who has so kindly chosen out this charming collection. He has gone to work like a botanist, walking quickly through a botanical garden, picking different sorts of flowers in the main beds and making up a beautiful bunch. We are led on, beginning with the dear little Athenian owl, by way of the Greek kings and cities, to the Roman families and emperors; and well preserved examples remind us of all that lies between.

Perhaps somebody would be equally kind and let me have from time to time a list of coins for sale, with prices. It is not a question in our case of rare pieces, but of well-preserved Greek and Roman coins belonging to those periods so important in art . . .

As I am placed here I have no chance of seeing larger works of art, and that makes looking at coins all the more enjoyable. One can very well learn the history of art from them, especially if one's eye is trained by studying sculpture in marble. In former times I myself began collecting, friends here also are keen on learning more about coins and acquiring them, and we have bought the first collection of Mionet copies . . .

My very hearty thanks for lending such a kind ear to my little silent wishes. With the best wishes for your happiness.

Jena,
18th May 1803.

As the selfwill of Genius is urging me to and fro between German prosody and the theory of colour, and as a favourable beginning let me hope I may to some extent prosper if I prolong my stay here, I have come to the conclusion that I really have nothing further to discuss with Herr Cotta and that I can perfectly well remain here. So on Saturday morning the messenger will bring you a short article on the typographical state of affairs and a receipt for the money Cotta is to bring with him.

It almost distresses me that May is over already and nothing has been done on any side.

My greetings to you, and take every pleasure in your new play.

Weimar,
1st July 1803.

Accept, my dear Sir and Friend, with my best thanks this small parting gift that Privy-Councillor Wolzogen is bringing you.

You liked Herr von Knebel's Spanish snuff, and we found some more. Where? We'll tell you, once it reaches you safely. Fill your snuff box with it and think often of my affection and regard when you take a pinch, either alone or in good company, always a pleasant moment.

The sower passes on once he has sown, and leaves the seed to sprout. What a pity you cannot see all the good grain now coming up which you scattered among us . . .

Weimar,
12th to 14th July 1803.

We hadn't expected your letter before to-day, so were all the more delighted when it took us by surprise yesterday evening. I'm so pleased that everything you are doing is going well; you deserve that it should, too, for acting so cleverly and tactfully. Don't worry about the expense, I'm glad to meet any for you, and you will come back soon enough to the cares of housekeeping. The purchase-money [for our farm at Oberrossla] will be paid on Saturday, the 16th, and after that there'll be a good deal to think of and see to. For that and other reasons I'm not coming to Lauchstädt; in any case there's no point except to see you.

Instead I advise you to go to Dessau, perhaps taking Mlle Probst with you, just to make things suitable; if others also joined your party that would be quite proper too. But you'll be able to arrange that best yourself. You will need four or five days for the trip, if you want to enjoy seeing everything in comfort, and that would help to pass the month pleasantly. Don't be frightened of the expense. All I want is for you to come back happy and loving me. I'm looking forward to all you'll tell me about it. If I possibly can, I will send August so that you can take him to Dessau with you. He's very good, by the way, and fairly resigned about not making the trip to Lauchstädt . . .

Hofrat [Schiller] has come bringing your letter. I am enjoying

* Who had just left Weimar after a fortnight's visit.

† In Lauchstädt where she was acting as deputy for Goethe at the theatre run by the Weimar actors during the summer months.

your enjoyment and am sending this by a messenger dear to us both.

I hope he will arrive safely and tell you how much we have thought about you. I've given the coachman a crown piece to pay for August on the way; find out what's left and give the man a good tip. There are six bottles of wine for you too.

Now August is with you don't delay, set off for Dessau and back to Lauchstädt; stay a few days and be back at the end of the month. It will give you much pleasure that way and I'll enjoy what you have to tell me afterwards.

Next time you write send me your latest new shoes you told me about, with their soles danced through, just so as to give me something belonging to you again, to press to my heart. Farewell, love to Mlle Silie and thanks for her charming letter.

Write again as soon as you can.

You see I've got all your letters. There are bound to be people at Lauchstädt who have been in Dessau, so find out how things are done there. Give about a 'caroline' in tips at Wörlitz where there are so many gardeners and guides to pay; that's usually an attendant's business. Be sure to see everything. Farewell and love me.

350 To JOHANNES VON MÜLLER *

Weimar,
4th September 1803.

Dear Sir, since our happy meeting in Zurich I have heard nothing directly from you, though I have certainly kept in touch with you indirectly.

Perhaps I ought not to mention the letters made public without your knowledge and even against your will, but they were a great gift; as they enable those who admire what you have since achieved to see you also as a young man with all your youthful energy reaching out on every side and to infinite heights.

At present my friend *Hofrat* von Schiller, who sends his best respects, is busy adapting the story of 'Tell' as a tragedy. And the first thing he did was to acquaint himself with your History of Switzerland, letting me share in his studies. For who values the historian more than the poet does? Who is better able to distinguish well-treated from crudely-worked material in any history he reads? I heard some time ago, too, from our good Professor Sartorius that you cheered him most kindly in his sad illness in Vienna by your

* The Swiss historian, then in Vienna.

help for mind and body. So I can truly say you have constantly been in my thoughts.

I feel all the more confident, then, in asking for your interest in a matter I have greatly at heart.

Professor Schütz of Jena let himself be persuaded to move to Halle, where considerable advantages were offered to him. This breaks up the 'Jenaer Litteraturzeitung' and we must find means to get a similar new journal together.

In Jena and Weimar the great majority of University men and other scholars have eagerly joined to undertake this task. I need not enumerate the difficulties, you can tell them at a glance; and you will agree with me that the new association's most pressing need is to seek the support of gifted men with sound knowledge and a well-deserved reputation.

And who, Sir, combines these and similar qualities so happily as you do? Your help would greatly oblige us, your sincere admirers, and you would earn the thanks of the best of princes so eager to further all that is good and who has known and esteemed you for years. May I then ask if there is any new historical work about which you would care to write something for publication? Perhaps I might suggest our friend Sartorius's 'History of the Hanseatic League'? And may I beg you kindly to let me know soon if we are to have the pleasure of such a valued contribution, perhaps before the end of the year? I must apologise for importuning you in this way; and I can scarcely venture to name any sum in connection with an object beyond price . . .

351 To A. W. SCHLEGEL*

*Weimar,
2nd October 1803.*

The enclosures will excuse me sufficiently for not having answered your kind letter more quickly, and even for sending only a word or two to-day.

I have been busy with the [art-]exhibition during these last few weeks; it always takes a good deal of arranging. I have devoted my evenings to the rehearsals of 'Julius Caesar' in detail and as a whole. I have concentrated all my thoughts on directing this difficult undertaking. And I must say everybody concerned in it has done his utmost to emulate the author and the translator.

* When Goethe was producing Schlegel's translation of *Julius Caesar*.

This note has just come from our friend Schiller; I'll let it speak for itself:

'I am going to Jena this morning. I am taking back a strong impression with me and I shall be able to tell you something of it at the second performance in a week's time. There is no doubt that "Julius Caesar" has all the qualities needed to become a mainstay of the theatre. An interesting action, variety and richness, force of passion and colourful happenings taking place before the eyes of the audience—and as for art, it has all one could want or need. That makes any trouble taken with it a clear gain; besides the growing perfection shown in the performance of this play is bound to call attention to the progress of our theatre.'

I wish I could soon act as your host at a performance of this play; if you were here, it would gain by your interest and advice . . .

Let me know in advance when you hope to come. If I cannot be your host I shall see you are lodged near-by, and you shall always find congenial company at my table. I am saving up a great many things till then . . .

Some more letters have just come, praising yesterday's performance, and mentioning that the play has never been performed in full in England and not at all in the last fifty years, because Garrick himself was once unsuccessful with it . . .

552 To A. W. SCHLEGEL

Weimar,
6th October 1803.

As far as I recollect the last letter I sent you was full of nothing but 'Julius Caesar'—I am sure that far from blaming me, you will have shared my interest. I shall be busy rehearsing it to-night and to-morrow, finishing and polishing the detail . . . The second performance is to be on Saturday, the 8th.

I must tell you about one device I am using to give the audience more spectacle to enjoy. I have made the funeral procession much longer than the play requires, copying classical tradition by including wind instruments, lictors, standard-bearers, various *feretra*, showing cities, fortresses, rivers and the images of ancestors. There are freemen, mourning women, relatives etc. besides, and the whole is an attempt to attract less educated people, to bring the half-educated nearer to an understanding of the play and to win a smile of approval from the more cultured ones.

I am stopping now, hoping you will see it yourself, otherwise I should be in danger of covering page after page with remarks on the merit of the play and of the translation, on what we have done so far and what we hope to achieve . . .

353 To A. W. SCHLEGEL

Weimar,
27th October 1803.

Let me dictate to-day's hurried notes on one side of the page, so that I can add anything that occurs to me later.

In our performance of 'Julius Caesar', as in all plays requiring elaborate staging, non-essentials are just symbolically indicated. Our stage is already filled with principal figures alone, like a bas-relief or a crowded historical painting. Shakespeare's plays lend themselves particularly to this treatment because they were probably written for smaller theatres. Transplanting them on to a larger stage where greater reality is demanded to carry conviction, is the task that Iffland will best solve in his own way [in Berlin].

But I am glad to give you my ideas on the special points you mention.

I have the following suggestions to make to do away with some of the inconveniences. Act 3 should be given without a break and should begin with the sitting of the Senate. The benches should be cleared away and Caesar's body removed without lifting it up in view of the audience; so after Antony's 'Lend me your hand' there ought to be a scene inserted—with a view of a short street—acted at the front of the stage. It would not be difficult to write such a scene; it would show some of the Senate fleeing from the Capitol and some of the populace, in the agitation that must follow a deed like this. Pity for the dead man, apprehension of some greater evil to all, personal fear etc., a few words only, just filling up the time and no more, and seeming to link on to the next speech, the citizens' cry in the Forum 'We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.'

I should not like to dispense with the scene with Cinna the poet; it can quite well happen in the Forum and make a comical, gruesome ending to the intensely serious third act. One sees the populace's utter lack of reasonableness and sees them for the last time.

I should be unwilling, but I would rather do without the scene with the Triumvirs than add it to Act 3; for I think a handsome tent, standing quietly there throughout the whole Act, would be a good thing. The transformation from Scene One to Scene Two by

just using a canopy was rather insufficient, even considering our scanty properties.

I know it is right and good for Octavius to reveal himself and for Lepidus to be so revealed. But the effect of this scene could be given quite well by Brutus and Lucilius in a short dialogue at the beginning of Act 4. The audience could be vividly told of the rapid rise of a powerful opposition and of the inopportune quarrel between Brutus and Cassius.

If you would care to write a few scenes of this kind, let me have them; or send me any other ideas you have for making the performance of this admirable play easier and more impressive.

Then on page 116 there's the poet who seems suddenly to fall from heaven, but I feel is indispensable as a diversion for the audience and to obliterate what has gone before. I have written a dozen or so lines in rhyme for him to explain himself more clearly and forcefully.

Altogether I am wrestling with this work and I daresay this conflict will never be resolved. Everything in the play serves its purpose with an infinite grace, delightful to study; there's not a superfluous word and nothing essential to it as a whole is left out. And yet one would like to take away and to add a touch here and there for the sake of theatrical effect. In this, as in all Shakespeare's works, everything is there already in the basic arrangement of the material and its treatment. So if you try to shift this balance at any point, it begins to creak at several joints and threatens to collapse altogether. There is no doubt that the performance in Berlin will show this more clearly still. I very much want to keep such a magnificent play for the stage.

My kindest regards; let me hear soon how you are getting on with all this.

354 To Mme DE STAËL *

Jena,
16th December 1803.

Surely, dear Madame, this is a most striking inconsistency; you are in Weimar and I am not flying to assure you most sincerely of my devotion. However, I shall not quarrel with the pressure of business or my indisposition that both keep me here. I am glad of them, for I owe them a piece of good fortune I should never have

* From the French.

dared to hope for. Now it is you who are coming to the hermit; and he will do his utmost to dispel everything that could prevent him from devoting himself entirely to his welcome guest. You will brighten these sad winter days and these endless evenings will be like moments.

Believe me, Madame, I most fully appreciate your kindness and I am eagerly looking forward to the moment when I can express my regard for you.

I am arranging for a small suite of rooms near-by to be put at your disposal. And I am asking Mme Schiller to let me know your plans and to tell me which day you are arriving.

355 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
23rd January 1804.

I was just going to ask how you are, for this long separation ends by giving one a strange feeling.

Mme de Staël came to see me for the first time to-day. One always has the same feeling: with all her politeness she is really rude, like a traveller among the Hyperboreans, whose magnificent old firs and oaks, iron and amber one might put to some use or ornament. She makes, however, her host fetch out his precious old carpets as gifts, and at the same time his rusty weapons for defence.

I saw Johannes Müller yesterday and I expect him again to-day. I shall pass on your greetings to him. He is quite shocked at what a hospital Weimar is now; things must look very bad if the Duke himself keeps his room. In the midst of all these trials I have the comfort that your work has not been wholly interrupted; as far as I can see, that is the only thing that would be an irreparable loss; the little I have to do can if necessary be dispensed with. Do give yourself sufficient rest until you are well enough for full activity. You shall hear about Müller early to-morrow. The friendliest of farewells.

356 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
28th March 1804.

It would give me very great pleasure, dear friend, if you would visit me to-morrow morning at eleven. I'll be there to receive you

in my front rooms, and please, come in your carriage, the path through the garden is impassable since the last snowfall. Should any friend of yours wish to come with you, she will be welcome too. I have some interesting new prints to show, a heavenly Claude Lorrain.

357 To SCHILLER

Weimar,
16th April 1804.

I

1. Some others ought to enter with Macbeth and Banquo so that the latter can ask: 'How far is't called to Forres?'

II

2. 'A bell rings.' This must not be the ringing but the deep note of a bell.
3. The old man should sit down or else go off. A slight alteration could make Macduff round off the act.

III

4. Macbeth's attendant ought to be better dressed and altogether fitted out to suggest a page.
5. Eysensteen's cloak is too tight. It needs another panel.
6. It should be quite dark for Banquo's murder.
7. The fruit on the banquet table ought to look redder.
8. Banquo's ghost looks to me too prosaic in his short coat. But I cannot quite suggest what alteration I should like.

IV

9. The witches ought to have wire-frames under their veils so that their heads do not look too flat. They might perhaps be given some decorative wreaths, rather after the fashion of the Sybils.
10. In our version the back-curtain shows the horizon in the witches scene, so Macbeth ought not to say 'Come in without there', for this supposes the scene to be in the cave.

V

11. Lady Macbeth washes or rubs her hands, one upon the other.
12. The shields ought to be repainted.
13. Macbeth should put on his armour, or at least part of it, on the stage. Otherwise he has too much to say without any corresponding action.
14. He ought not to fight in his ermine cloak.

Weimar,
5th August 1804.

It was a very great pleasure to me to see your handwriting again. I have been fretting and fuming in the way I usually give vent to my grief, over your attack of illness of which I only heard after some time. I am very glad indeed that you are better now. Be sure not to exert yourself in this hot weather.

I enclose a letter from Zelter for me and for you. He is a most valiant and excellent creature and ought to have been born in some sturdy age among popes and cardinals. How miserable it is to see him on these sands, gasping for his native element.

Do give my warm greetings to Count Gessler; if I can arrange it, I shall come across next week.

I gladly endorse your opinion of [Bode's] Review of Kotzebue. If you would give Hofrat Eichstädt your advice on this matter, this shipment too could be dispatched.

I take a sincere interest in the well-being of you all, older and youngest alike, and I hope we shall be together again soon.

My regards to Frau von Wolzogen.

Weimar,
5th February 1805.

Better give in and let them have the subscription tickets *gratis*. It is no use reasoning with the English.

22nd February 1805.

Do tell me how you are if you do not mind writing a few words. I have not been able to get any real news of you, much as it interests me.

I have again reached a state of quiet and rest. I am receptive once more, but cannot produce anything. This worries me somewhat, for I should very much like to finish my essay on Winckelman.

How eagerly I wish I could see you again soon. In hopes of the best.

* Goethe's deputy in the theatre management.

† Who, like Goethe himself, had been seriously ill.

361 To CATHARINA ELISABETH GOETHE *Weimar,*
6th May 1805.

Dear Mother, a thousand thanks for all your kindness to our August! I hope that remembering his visit gives you at least a fraction of the joy we feel when he tells us of you. It takes us back so vividly to you and my old friends. Do give our hearty thanks to all who received him so kindly. That first journey of his to see the world has gone off so well, it gives me great hopes for the future. He had a happy childhood, and I want him to be untroubled and gay as he enters a more serious stage of life. We do so enjoy listening to him when he tells us how well and cheerful you always are; he has often to repeat this. I am well too, now the weather is better and I can get about more. All our heartiest greetings and our best thanks.

362 To ZELTER *Weimar,*
1st June 1805.

I have had few happy days since I wrote last. I thought to lose my own life and lost a friend* and with him half of my own existence. I ought really to make a fresh start, but at my age no way is open for it. So I am just taking each day as it comes and doing what is nearest, without a thought of anything further.

But people try to derive some entertainment from every loss and misfortune, and the actors and others are pressing me hard to commemorate the deceased in some way on the stage. I don't want to say more than that I have no objection, and I should just like to ask you if you would give me your help with some music? . . .

* Schiller; he had died on May 9th.

1805-1810

Denn der Mensch, der zur schwankenden Zeit auch
schwankend gesinnt ist,

Der vermehret das Uebel und breitet es weiter und
weiter;

Aber wer fest auf dem Sinne beharrt, der bildet die
Welt sich.

*Hermann und Dorothea,
Urania*

For the man who in wavering times inclines to wavering,
increases the evil and spreads it further and further. But
he, who in his own convictions stands fast, forms the
world as his own.

*Hermann and Dorothea,
Urania*

GOETHE felt the loss of Schiller most keenly; he first planned to finish *Demetrius*, the tragedy on which Schiller had been engaged at the time of his death, but he soon saw that the work was not congenial to him. A few months later however he wrote *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke* for a commemoration ceremony, as noble a tribute as any poet ever wrote for another.

By then the political situation was growing increasingly ominous. In January 1806 Napoleon established the Confederation of the Rhine and on 6th August the Austrian Emperor resigned his ancient Imperial title, bringing the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to an end. More and more German princes joined the Confederation. Prussia, who remained outside it, mobilised her army, and Carl August with the Weimar Corps joined her. On 24th September Goethe had gone to see Carl August at his headquarters at Niederrossla. He then returned to Weimar, although the Court—except the Duchess Louise—and many private citizens had fled from the town. On the 14th October heavy gunfire at Jena was heard in Weimar. The same evening French troops occupied the town and began to sack it. Some drunken soldiers broke into Goethe's house during the night and forced their way into his room; Christiane's presence of mind saved the situation. A few days later Goethe married her in the Stadtkirche.

The Prussian armies were forced to flee and the Weimar Corps followed them. Carl August could not return to Weimar until January 1807. Despite a heavy war indemnity which the country had to pay, it recovered more quickly than many had at first thought possible. As the war had moved North-East to Prussia and Russia, peace returned to Weimar and Goethe was able to resume his usual activities; politics for a few years did not again directly enter his life.

When it again was possible to travel he went to the Bohemian baths of Carlsbad and Teplitz, otherwise he hardly left Weimar or Jena, except in October 1808 when the Council of Princes, summoned by Napoleon, assembled at Erfurt. Naturally Carl August had to be present and he wished Goethe to be there too. Goethe had always admired Napoleon; at first he saw in him the genius who restored order after the Revolution and then the invincible conqueror; he now had long conversations with the Emperor, in Erfurt as well as in Weimar, which Napoleon visited a few days later. Napoleon talked to him at length about *Werther*, explaining that he thought it a weak point in the novel that Werther killed himself not only because of his love for Lotte but also because of the disappointment he experienced in his career.

Soon afterwards Goethe came to know Napoleon's brother Louis, who



Poplars on the Saale – water colour by Goethe

after his abdication as King of Holland visited the Bohemian baths and there met Goethe. Another acquaintance from Bohemia was Count Reinhardt, a French diplomat, with whom Goethe started a lively correspondence. The brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, philologists and authors of the German *Märchen*, Achim von Arnim, best known as the author of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, and Zacharias Werner, the dramatist and like the former a distinguished member of the Romantic School, came in touch with Goethe in one way or another at this time. So also did Heinrich von Kleist, the most prominent of that School, author of the story *Michael Kohlhaas* and the plays *Käthchen von Heilbronn* and *Der Prinz von Homburg*. Goethe produced his comedy *Der zerbrochene Krug* on the Weimar stage, but it proved a failure, for which Kleist held Goethe responsible.

In 1807 Bettina (the romantic daughter of his old Frankfort friend Maximiliane Brentano), later married to Achim von Arnim, came for the first of several visits to Weimar. Two years after Goethe's death she published *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*, where the correspondence which, for some years, she had carried on with Goethe is interspersed with letters of her own invention. A very different acquaintance, made first by correspondence in 1810, was with the brothers Boisseree, who were then working at a history of the Cathedral of Cologne. While the number of people with whom Goethe was in touch thus grew from year to year, in 1808 he lost his mother. She died on 13th September in the seventy-eighth year of a happy and active life. A few months before her death she received the first volumes of the new edition of her son's works, and, looking forward to the rest, she signed herself in a letter to him: 'your truly loving and happy mother.'

The variety of his experiences and occupations during these years did not weaken Goethe's literary output. *Faust* (Part I) was published in 1808, the novel *Die Wahlverwandschaften* in 1809, *Pandora*, which remained a fragment, was written, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, the continuation of the *Lehrjahre*, begun, and several of the short stories it contains were written in the years 1805-10, to which also belong many lyrical poems, especially sonnets. Besides this Goethe published his *Farbenlehre*, an essay on a volcanic hill in Bohemia, and various other scientific articles, and started on a biography of the artist Philipp Hackert (1737-1807).

Weimar,
9th March 1806.

They say that Oldenburg, the well-known Secretary of the Royal Society in London, only managed his voluminous correspondence by never opening a letter except pen in hand with his paper for answering it before him.

Could I have imitated this good example in my smaller way, I would have answered many a good man who through my hesitation was left without a letter. For we surely never read through a letter for the first time without feeling we want to answer it.

This time, then, I am going to thank you at once for your kind letter and the charming parcel.† I very much enjoyed seeing the great city through your medium. These able reproductions of so many curious scenes gave us the greatest pleasure. I hope you will let me know about your travels in Mecklenburg too. It is quite *terra incognita* to me, but there must of course be many an honest, interesting person living there . . .

The 'Wunderhorn' has given us such lively and lasting enjoyment; it's surely not right just to tell the author so. I feel I ought to bear witness of this joy to the world as well, which after all is not so rich in joys that it can let either ignorance or prejudice rob it of a true pleasure so easily got and so abundant. That's all for to-day; with best wishes and greetings of us all.

Weimar,
15th or 16th October 1806.

Tell me, my good Meyer, how can I help you? Coat, waistcoat, shirt, etc. I'll send them all gladly. Perhaps you could do with something to eat?

Weimar,
17th October 1806.

An old project has ripened in me during these last days and nights. It is my intention fully and legally to acknowledge as mine the little friend who has done so much for me and has also lived through all these hours of trial at my side.

* Poet of the Romantic School, author, together with his brother-in-law Brentano, of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of German folk-songs.

† With iron plaques of views of Berlin.

‡ Whose house had been ransacked.

§ Court-Chaplain.

Tell me, most reverend Sir, how to arrange for us to be married as soon as possible, on Sunday or before that? What steps have I to take? Should you not be able to perform the rite yourself, I should like it to take place in the sacristy of the Stadtkirche.

Give the messenger an answer back, if he finds you, please!

366 To Friends in Jena

Weimar,
18th October 1806.

We are most anxious about our friends in Jena, having heard nothing whatever from them. So may I beg those named below to relieve our minds with even just a word on this paper. As for us, we have come through all this dread and distress quite safely. Nothing has been damaged in my house and I have lost nothing. The Duchess is well and has conducted herself in a way that commands the highest admiration. I dined at the [French] Commandant's yesterday with Wieland. The good old man has come through it all safely too. The castle has escaped damage. We owe this solely to our Duchess. I am not able to give any further particulars.

Herr Kirchenrat GRIESBACH

Herr Professor SCHELVER (the Graben Street)

Herr FROMMANN (ditto)

Herr Hofrat FUCHS (the Castle)

Herr VON HENDRICHs, and all in his house

Herr VON TUEMPLING (the Fischers' house)

Herr Hofrat EICHSTÄDT (next to the Church)

Herr Geheimer Hofrat STARKE (the Market)

Herr Bergrat LENZ (Johannis Street)

Herr Dr SEEBECK (ditto)

Herr Major VON KNEBEL (at the New Gate)

Herr Professor HEGEL (at the old Fencing Rooms)

I should be glad, too, to receive news by this messenger, in letters or verbally, of the officials, mayors, and others known to me. I assure them all of my heartfelt sympathy over this sad occurrence.

367 To HEINRICH MEYER

Weimar,
20th October 1806.

My dear Professor, if you possibly can, do come to Hofrat Wieland's to-day or failing that to-morrow morning, and do his profile with

his skull-cap on; about the size of a Laubthaler. Denon, [Inspector-in-Chief of the French Museums], wants it to use it as a design for a medal. It is at least something that our conquerors are taking note of a few individuals, seeing they are levelling everything down.

368 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
21st October 1806.

I have just had some wine drawn off for you. It's here and you can send for it. Send someone trustworthy with a handcart and a letter for me. It might be as well for him not to come alone. But the road is fairly safe. Let me know what else to send you at the same time. I'll be only too glad to do it if I can.

I have asked my wine merchant in Erfurt to come here; at any rate I'll hear from him. I shall order wine for you too. Tell me how much, in your next letter.

I am very sorry we have lost Professors Schelver and Seebeck. But what else can one expect at a moment of shipwreck? I hope they will be happy elsewhere. Perhaps we shall recover and they will want to come back.*

We have traced the Dowager Duchess as far as Langensalza, that means also the Hereditary Prince, the Princess and your sister. They have not met with any accident. Nothing is known of the Duke, nor anything of Prince Bernhardt [with the Weimar Corps].

Bear up as well as you can. It's only at first that things are so difficult. But there are bound to be times of recovery and comfort again.

I shall write soon about our scientific institutions. Please keep an eye on them.

You'll be glad to hear that my good little friend and I were married two days ago; our wedding rings are dated 14th October.

The Duchess is at her post.

Denon, the Director of all the Imperial Museums of France, spent two nights with me. I had met him in Venice and it was a pleasure to see him again.

Farewell. My love to you. Write often.

I am meantime keeping your letter to your sister.

I had sealed this when your friendly and very welcome note of yesterday arrived. I'll only add greetings to Dr Voigt. Write to

* Only Professor Seebeck returned, Schelver settled at Heidelberg.

me, once good Schelver has really set off, and I'll tell you an idea I have had about the Botanical Institute. Best wishes to you and your family.

369 To DENON*

Weimar,
21st October 1806.

I reproach myself, honoured Sir and friend, because while you were here I felt nothing but the joy of seeing you again and forgot the misery around me. You have hardly left and I am once more reminded of the disasters that have overtaken the University of Jena; several estimable members of it beg me to recommend them to your protection. They are going to Naumburg in the hope of an introduction to his Excellency M. Maret. If they had applied to you directly for this I am sure my letter would not have been needed. I hope they will find you at Naumburg, and I write to beg you to do all you can for them and for me—I say 'for me', because the Jena institutions are in part my work and I am on the point of seeing the labour of thirty years lost for ever. You will understand that before losing hope one must do everything possible to save oneself and others.

370 To Dr NICOLAUS MEYER†

Weimar,
20th October 1806.

We are alive! It was like a miracle; our house was spared, neither looted nor burned down. The Duchess went through the most dreadful hours with us and it is to her that we owe some hope of future safety and already the preservation of the Castle. The Emperor arrived on the 15th October 1806.‡

It is remarkable how the days of disaster have been accompanied and lit up by the most beautiful sunshine.

To cheer these sad days with one festive event, my little companion and I decided yesterday, the 20th Sunday after Trinity, to enter formally into the wedded state. With this notification comes

* Inspector-in-Chief of the French Museums. (From the French.)

† In Bremen.

‡ It was then that Napoleon was so impressed by the Duchess's firmness—'Voilà une femme à laquelle même nos deux cents canons n'ont pu faire peur'—that he left the Duchy of Weimar unaltered in the peace treaty, though he told Carl August that he forgave him only out of respect for his wife.

a request for some butter and other transportable foodstuffs. Soon, in quieter moments, I'll send a fuller answer to your very kind letter.

371 To J. G. LENZ*

Weimar,
21st October 1806.

It is to be regretted, my dear Sir, that you did not let me know in more detail what [the French] had ordered you to do about moving the mineralogical collection. Had you done so, some redress might perhaps have been obtained. But now I must leave it entirely to you to make what arrangements you can. Dr Fuchs has a good number of rooms in one wing [of the castle] which are not in use. But I cannot give you any advice from this distance. As for yourself, you need not be so very anxious. I shall have an appeal put in several papers for members of the Mineralogical Society to help, and that is sure to bring a response. Write to any wealthy members you know, especially the ones in Hungary and Transylvania, telling them of the state of Jena in general and of your own plight in particular, but with dignity and not abjectly. You are sure to get help. Try to preserve the collection as well as you can. It can all be put in order again soon, once this storm is over.

In the meantime here are ten Thaler for your most urgent needs. You will hear more from me soon. Meanwhile keep up your spirits and take yourself in hand. You are well known to be an active man and you have plenty of connections, so you have less reason to be despondent than thousands of others may have. Be assured now and always of my lasting interest.

372 To F. A. WOLF

Weimar,
3rd November 1806.

Your letter from Leipzig was a very great joy to me, my dear Wolf, and it eased an almost unbearable longing. I have been present in imagination with you, at your house, with our good Frau Loder, on the mountain and even on [Professor] Reil's peak, but in the trying situation of not being able to picture it all exactly. Here is a greeting for you, then, from land half-dry after being swamped. And let us draw even closer the old ties of friendship and intimacy. We were quite bewildered for the first hours and days,

* Mineralogist in Jena.

and almost failed to realise the danger till it had passed over. I housed first General Victor, then Marshal Lannes and Marshal Augereau, with their adjutants and suites. Beds for forty had to be got ready one night, and we made them up with our tablecloths for sheets. You can easily imagine all that goes with this sort of thing. But it did at least mean our house was spared; and though we gave and shared out a good deal, we can really only talk of loss and not of damage. That's all for to-day. Best wishes to Minchen, and to Berger with thanks for his note. Kindest regards from my little wife, August and Riemer. Please send the enclosed letter as soon as you can to Berlin, and hand the mystic note to the authority. Good-bye, a thousand times, and do write and let me know more soon . . .

373 To CARL AUGUST*

*Weimar,
October to December 1806.*

I had hoped to send your Highness a cheerful greeting after so many misfortunes for some time. But the little gentleman waited till to-day to make his entry into the world. He seems healthy and sturdy, and he will be brave too; he and his mother have shown that already, before he was born, during that dreadful time.

One often remembers hard times, so it is cheering to think back to the good ones too and to compare one period with another. For instance I was remembering how seventeen years ago to-day my August made me very happy with his arrival. He is still turning out quite well, so I felt I could reckon that your Highness, though absent, would approve the step I took. When the uncertainty was at its height I gave him through a legal union what he has long deserved, a father and a mother . . .

You will have heard a good deal of what has befallen us. You are certain to find the traces of the disaster fainter than imagination pictures them at a distance. I can assure you for instance that your Highness's possessions which have been under my charge are almost intact, except that just what interests you especially, your collection of maps, has suffered especially.

* The letter was begun on October 19th, though not with the paragraph which later formed its beginning, was continued at various dates and sent off only after 27th December, after the birth of Carl August's illegitimate son by the actress Frau von Heygemann. (For parts of this letter the *Von der Hellen* edition has been used.)

But we can bear it all if you are left to us and we to you. Nobody can feel a keener joy at that thought than he who remains for life what he has been so long, your devoted

GOETHE.

I find it easier to write and add some more now that the ice is broken, though when I have to write myself, I always feel rather paralysed.

I have seen the long awaited new arrival; he is sturdy, has a good colour and seems likely to live. I hope when he comes to know the world, he will find it more cheerful than it seems to us now. I am too old to introduce him into it, but perhaps I may be useful to him. His mother's rooms are in order again, too, pleasant and comfortable, thanks to the carpenter's skill in replacing the broken, shattered woodwork. What lucky people workmen are! Their work can be restored by Tom, Dick or Harry without any real loss.

Let me go on like this; if it were right to dictate, my letter would be a better one. There is the charm of hope these days in seeing the beginning of life . . .

Reviewing what has been lost one surely is all the more grateful for what is left. The Library had a marvellous escape. They could not force the doors, they sawed the gates in two, broke open the doors of the Office of the City Archive and found the papers and acts there; which after all was not so bad. It saved the lower floor. They broke open the Office itself and stole some trifles. They then went through every other floor of the Library but took away nothing but some pieces of green linen. There has been no damage, and for the moment it is as if nothing had happened. I suspect we owe a good deal to Denzel, their Town-Commandant, [remembering his student-days in Jena].

I had almost forgotten to say that the collection of coins was moved to Altstädt during those last anxious days. They enquired a good deal about it, too. It can come back now and I hope it will be in its usual place to welcome you.

Our good Kraus was crushed by all these events. We have tried to keep the Art Institute going [after his death] as one of the vital centres of activity in Weimar. Meyer is showing his old gifts as a teacher, and there are more students every week . . .

I could not yet bring myself to go to Jena, and I have torn up several letters to you, not unlike this one. The upheaval is still too near; whatever one says is inadequate or inadmissible, so it's better to be silent or prudent than to speak at all. A few things only were

taken from the mineralogical collection and nothing else in it was disturbed. The Büttner Library is intact, though the middle floor was and still is a hospital. We are glad about it, for until now a fresh requisition was to be expected every day and often a senseless one, doubly hard to bear. The Botanical Garden has suffered little, the house rather more and our good, really honest Schelver most of all. He was plundered *à plusieurs reprises* and left with only what he stood up in; and he went away, I don't know where, with a wounded French officer who had taken to him . . . We are holding the theatre as a whole together, for this could never be replaced; later on circumstances will decide whether we ought to keep it on or bring it to an end . . .

But let me try to tell you something pleasant. It is always a fresh joy to me, after the dreadful lamentations of my best friends, that the damage to the Park is absolutely nil. The avenue to Belvedere not touched, the 'Stern' unharmed and not more cut down than what you can put right in a fortnight, perhaps with planting something even more attractive . . .

As I write the above, simply jotted down like so much else, I learn in my retirement that we are not to see you shortly as we had hoped; in fact you mean to move further away from us. That puts me in a little quandary. It is a small one, but still a quandary. For I would rather have mentioned my request somewhat later, when you had clearly seen our present circumstances.

Forgive me then if I speak of our situation here and of myself. No-one is going forward, in fact everyone of us, alas, is losing ground and it goes hard with me too on all sides. My Mother's possessions in Frankfort are of course dwindling and naturally I am badly off here, too. I have not been plundered, but what with presents and charity one is glad to give, I reduce myself to much the same level. I shouldn't worry any further about it, but that I have my dear ones here, and must think of them when Death comes knocking at my door.

So let me speak frankly. As my sole resource for those for whom I am so anxious at this moment, I have only the house which I owe to your generous kindness in the past. Only one last formality is lacking to establish my ownership in case of my death. Previously there were some scruples about making it over to me as the owner; time has meanwhile done away with these. Everybody believes me the owner. In happier days (I might almost call them blissful days), I spent more on it than perhaps I ought. I have shown my appreci-

ation of your gift by fitting it out and using it not just for a life of ease but as far as possible for the spread of art and knowledge. And now heavy war contributions are levied on me because of this house; one word to Privy Councillor Voigt would settle the whole thing quietly in a moment. It has all come up in connection with the war contributions I am willing to make. This, then, is my request: Give me what you have already given, and I shall hope to prove myself doubly and more than doubly grateful for it. For so many days now the house has been tottering and threatening to collapse over our heads; it will be a happy day for me and my family if the foundations of what is then really our property once stand firm under our feet.

I don't want to end on a miserable note; there is enough already to sadden one's spirits.

So I am glad to report that Carlsbad did me a great deal of good; I haven't had a serious attack all winter. But I have been suffering since the 14th October, physically too, but it's too recent to talk about it. Heaven grant we shall in time get these recent events too into perspective.

The mention of perspective reminds me of something really moving to me; your asking about my 'Farbenlehre' on our last day's sport. I am going on with the printing with the greatest eagerness. For the thought of losing these and other papers was the most dreadful thing to me in those dreadful moments. *Confiteor*, with a thousand good wishes.

374 To ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT* *Weimar,*
3rd April 1807.

I have been thinking of writing to you for some days, my dear friend. And I shall no longer put off thanking you most heartily for the first volume of your 'Travels'. Its contents make up one great gift, and your friendly dedication adds a second one; nothing could be a greater pleasure or honour to me. I fully appreciate such a token and thank you very sincerely. I have always felt a warm interest in you and in what you write and do; now I must thank you for your charming way of giving me myself almost a personal share in the treasures with which you delight us.

* Who had sent a copy of his book on his travels in South America; the section *Géographie des plantes* was dedicated to Goethe.

I have already read through the volume carefully more than once, and immediately tried to make up for the promised large map by an imaginary landscape; this shows the heights of the European and American mountains according to a 4,000-toise scale given at the side, and marks the snowlines and limits of vegetation. I am sending you a copy of this draft made half in jest and half in earnest. Please add what corrections you like with a pen and with colour, make marginal notes and send it back as soon as you can. For since the end of the war we have started our Wednesday meetings [in my house] again; I bring important objects in nature and art to the notice of her Highness the Duchess, the Princess and a few other ladies. I can think of nothing more interesting or more appropriate than to use your writings and to make them, as you yourself do, a basis for general observations.

But if you could possibly let me have a proof-copy of your own map, that would of course be exactly what I need. And you would do me a great favour if you would send me a sketch (with dates) of your life, education, writings, activities and journey. Some items—I might almost say all of them—are known to me already, but I cannot arrange them chronologically. I have so very little time to search in books and periodicals. When you visit us again, you will find minds and hearts prepared to enjoy at the source what they now have to take at second hand. I shall certainly make the best use of anything you tell me for this laudable purpose.

The problem of colour still occupies me, and the printing of my work is going slowly forward. The didactic part is finished, though mostly rather as a sketch than worked out. Now I am among the thorny polemic paths. It is an unfriendly and also thankless business, showing step by step, word for word, that the world has been in error for the past hundred years. However, I must go through with it, and I am looking forward to the broader historical field in which I hope to stride briskly on, once I have made my way out of the prickly theoretical labyrinth.

Your and Bonplan's works contain several most important cases which I have noted in order to refer to them in the review with which I mean to round off my book; I would I had already the pleasure of knowing the work in your hands and of being able to hope for your opinion of the whole and your observations on the individual parts. But that is likely to take yet another year, which, however, after all is bound to pass like the rest.

It is long since I heard anything from your brother; this too is no

doubt my fault, for it is long since I wrote. Do give me news of him.

Our excellent Hackert in Florence has had an attack of apoplexy. He hopes to recover and to serve art again. I could have wished a man like him in your company in those tropical lands.

Do let me know how Hirt is, also Zelter and Bury. I am almost glad now that there are only few people for me to ask about in Berlin.*

His Highness the Duke has given us a good deal of news of you, of your magnetic garden and other investigations. He is well initiated into what you are doing and planning.

My sincerest greetings and wishes.

375 To ZELTER

*Carlsbad,
27th July 1807.*

It is long since you heard anything from me, my dear good friend. Now I shall give you a brief account of what I have been doing up till the present. I came to Carlsbad in very wretched health, and this was at first so aggravated by desultory taking of the waters, which, though customary, was quite unsuited in my condition, that I got into a state of extreme discomfort. This then quite suddenly took a better turn through an alteration in the cure and the use of some medicines prescribed by Dr Kapp of Leipzig; and I am delighted to be able to tell my friends that this has now been continuing for the past six weeks. I have been here two months already and busy at different times in different ways. First I dictated some little stories and fairy-tales, which I had carried about in my head for a long time. Then I had a spell of drawing and painting landscapes. Now I am busy putting together my ideas on the geology of the district and writing a short report on a new local collection of rocks.

I have got to know a great variety of interesting people, chief among them the French Resident Reinhardt, whose last post was in Jassy, and of whose fate you are sure to have heard. But on the whole I live a very solitary life here; for one hears nothing anywhere but Jeremiads, and although these are occasioned by great evils, in society they sound like empty phrases. When someone comes and tells me what he and those near him have suffered, what he lost or what he fears to lose, I listen sympathetically and like to

* Because of the sad situation of Berlin during Napoleon's campaign of 1807.

talk about it and comfort him. But when people bewail as lost an entirety which nobody in Germany in his life has ever seen, far less worried about, then I have to hide my impatience for fear of being rude or seeming an egoist. As I say, it would be inhuman not to sympathise with anybody grieving over his lost income or ruined career, but I am quite unable to agree with him that the world in general is even in the least going to rack and ruin on that account.

Do tell me how the situation has developed for you, my dear friend. I have thought of you a thousand times, and of all you have achieved as a private individual, without support or any particular encouragement from the rich and powerful. It may be that what we have most to regret in the present political change is chiefly this, that under the old form of government Germany and in particular its northern part, left the individual scope for as much development as possible and allowed everyone to act rightly as he thought fit and in his own way, yet without the whole ever demonstrating any particular interest in it.

These general observations are admittedly inadequate, and I should like to develop them further sometime with you; but now let me add a particular request, begging you to be good enough to gratify it soon.

I have never yet had the chance of any consecutive enjoyment of music in Weimar, though we have singers and instruments and in fact I am in charge of these matters. The wretched conditions of life and the theatre here always destroy anything higher, though this is or should be their only reason for existing. We have now got a few newcomers from Schleswig, a very fine tenor and a coach; I do not know them personally, but they seem to be good and sensible people.

I do not want to concern myself with the opera because I have not got a full understanding of these musical matters. So I want to leave the secular for the sacred, and to have a weekly performance at home of sacred music for several voices, rather like your arrangement [at the Berlin Academy], though of course only a very faint image of it. Do help me and send me some not too difficult songs for four voices, with the parts written out. I shall be glad to refund the cost. Tell me if they are to be had in print or engraved? Send canons too, and anything you think useful for the purpose. You will always be in our midst in spirit, and heartily welcome if you appear in person. Do let me have a line from you here, for I shall be staying here another four weeks, and send me a parcel to Weimar

so that I can make a beginning at once when I reach home. My greetings to you, and rest assured of my abiding friendship.

376 To Frau VON STEIN

Carlsbad,
25rd August 1807.

The carriage that brought my August here will bring back some news from me. I shall not be following it for a few weeks, for my stay here is valuable to me in two ways; besides the good that nature does me, politically it is a peaceful sphere, troubled by no more than the echo of the trials without.

I am exceedingly sorry that you have been robbed of the presence of your good son. Peace after such a war is like the condition that follows a severe illness. In mortal danger one's only thought is to save one's life, and often one can only rescue a part of it hardly worth saving. I can well imagine without going into it in detail, what those wretched districts [of Silesia] have suffered . . .

I have read [Mme de Staël's] 'Corinne'; you probably know it already, though your letter leaves this in doubt. Of course I am bribed to speak well of it, but I think I can rate its value apart from myself. I am not surprised at Wieland's not being quite fair to this work; after all, its authors are not fair to him. The French and English, who are mentioned at length, are not pleased with the book; so it is only fair that the Germans who [—with the exception of myself—] are passed over in silence, are not pleased either.

So Weimar is forsaken by the Ducal Family at present. May they soon return happily under good auspices.

Take advantage of the fine weather to go out; I hope to join you soon. What I bring with me then may contain a few things that will please you. My best wishes.

377 To C. F. REINHARDT*

Carlsbad,
28th August 1807.

My dear friend, I have been eagerly awaiting your letter from Dresden. I am very glad to hear that you are now in a situation that allows you to satisfy your more immediate wishes without sacrificing remoter ones. Once I hear of your appointment as Prefect I will plan a journey to see you, to congratulate the Department,

* A French diplomat whose acquaintance Goethe had just made.

and to bring you my warmest wishes for a fine and growing scope of action . . .

I am very glad indeed you saw my 'Tasso' performed in Leipzig [by our Weimar Company], for it acquainted you with the result of a great deal of trouble and effort. The dramatist really only writes on sand, so I feel all the more encouraged that this play has made its impress on your sympathetic heart and clear judgement.

Meanwhile your friendly gift, the beautiful little cabinet of books, has delighted me like Pandora's box, but in a good sense. I have been greatly occupied and stimulated by La Fontaine's works and by the older and more recent novels. Montesquieu in particular astounds me. The whole history of our times is there word for word in his works. It is like the doctors finding in Hippocrates exact descriptions of the illnesses of which their patients continue to die.

I have rejoiced again over your honest judgement of 'Corinne'. You are perfectly fair to the work and I have no wish to defend what you criticise. But I am glad to own to being more kind and tolerant about this work, indeed every work. It needs talent to produce even what is not satisfactory. I always feel that errors blend into something good. It's the same when you look closely at individuals; we always find cause to praise and blame them, and yet we have to end by loving them. It's really this all-embracing quality of love that makes things live.

Your letter from Weimar has arrived too . . .

I am particularly pleased you should have got to know and like my home and household, for now your imagination does not have to seek me only at the 'Three Moors' [in Carlsbad]. Once you have safely reached the Rhine, please send me a description or better still a sketch of your house and the neighbourhood, so that I can refresh my memory of former days and come to join you in spirit in that beautiful sunny land. This magnificent late summer and autumn must be infinitely beautiful by the Main and Rhine . . .

378 To A. ELISABETH VON TÜRCKHEIM*

Weimar,
14th December 1807.

Your letter, my dear friend, came too late; your son sent it to me from Dresden. He was here without my knowing it was he. I

* Née (Lili) Schöнемann.

confused the two families with similar names and thought he belonged to the other one. But I liked him very much even as a stranger. A timely shower of rain came on during his second visit, and kept him here for a little. I reproached myself for not having asked him to dinner, though it was nearly time, for I had taken a real liking to him. And now I am waiting impatiently, and so far in vain, for your other son whose coming is announced. I should like to make up to him what I missed with the first one.

Let me end by saying that after such a long time it was an infinite delight to me to see a few lines from your dear hand; let me kiss it a thousand times in memory of those days which I count among the happiest of my life. May you live happily and peacefully after the many trials and troubles,* which we too had to suffer later on, and which often made me think of your steadfastness and nobility in endurance. Farewell, once more, and pray think of me sometimes. Yours evermore.

379 To BETTINA BRENTANO†

Weimar,
9th January 1808.

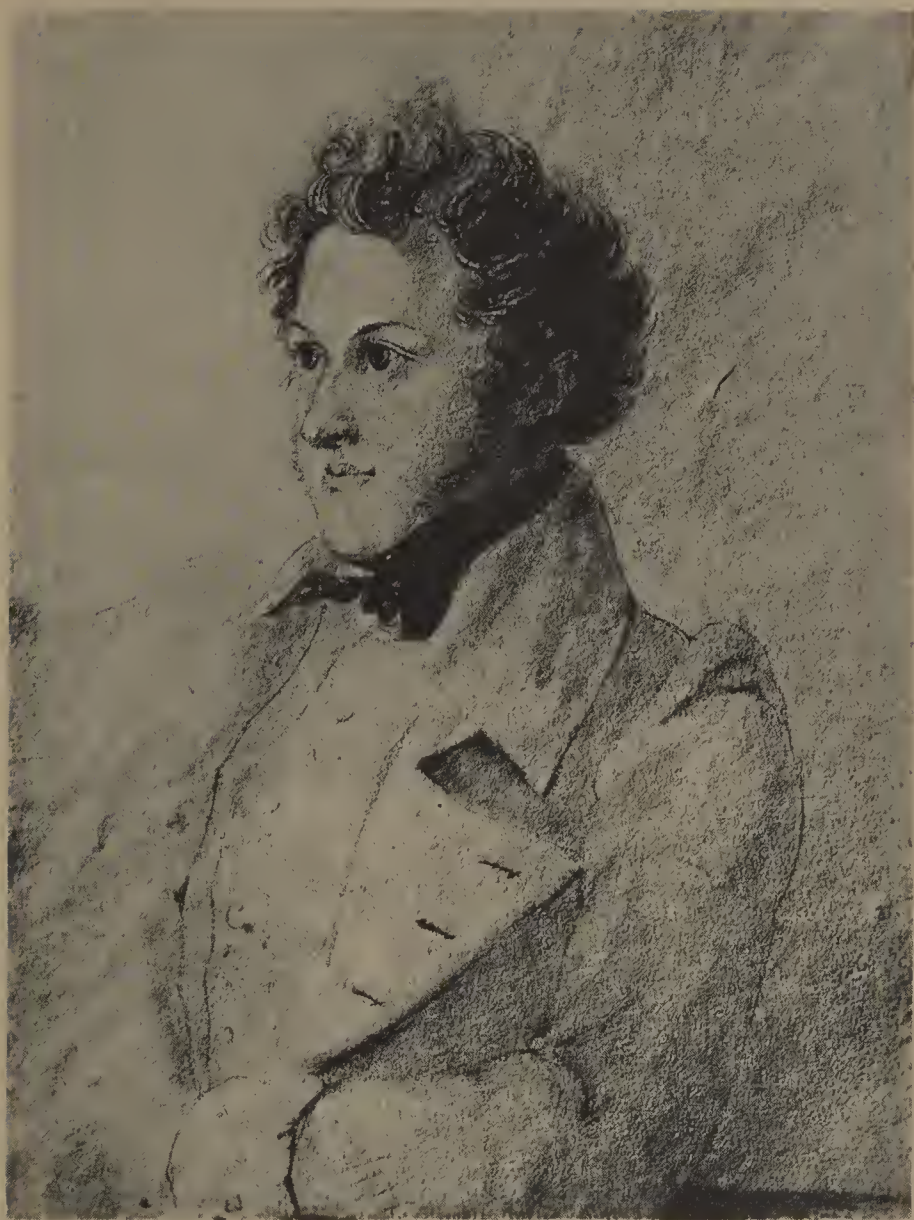
Dear Bettina, you have been perfect with these Christmas presents of yours, wise and resourceful, knowing and meeting the needs of each of us. Your box arrived just before dinner. I carried it under a cloth to where you once sat, and drank out of the beautiful glass to August first of all. How astonished he was when I gave it to him! Then Riemer was invested with cross and purse. Nobody guessed where the things came from. When I also displayed the extremely artistic and charming case with knife, fork and spoon, the lady of the house began to get vexed at coming off with nothing. I waited a little to test her patience, and at last I took out the dress-material; the riddle was solved and everyone was happy, singing Bettina's praises.

Turning over to a new page I have to give praise and thanks *da capo*. The exquisite charm of the gifts was amazing. Connoisseurs were called to admire the dear little wrestling *putti*; in short it grew into a festive occasion, as if you had just come back yourself.

I hope to have news soon how you found my dear mother, how

* Owing to the wars.

† Daughter of Goethe's old friend Maximiliane, née La Roche.



August von Goethe – by Julie Grafín Egloffstein

you're looking after her and what sort of amusements you are having together.

The little cap of your dear sister arrived earlier; I dare not say it aloud, but it doesn't suit anyone as well as her . . .

Adieu, dear child, write soon, to give me something to 'translate'. *

380 To HEINRICH VON KLEIST

Weimar,
1st February 1808.

Dear Sir, I am most grateful to you for the copy of 'Phoebus'. I have enjoyed reading the essays in prose very much. I knew some of them already. I have not yet been able to come to terms with your 'Penthesilea'. She belongs to such an unusual race and moves in so strange a region that I must take time to get used to both. And allow me to say—for unless one is honest, it would be better to say nothing at all—that it always disturbs and saddens me to see really talented and gifted young men waiting for a theatre that is still to be. A Jew waiting for the Messiah, a Christian for the New Jerusalem, a Portuguese for Don Sebastian, is not to my mind a more distressing sight. Before any trestle-stage I would say to the true theatrical genius; '*Hic Rhodus, hic salta!*'. On any fair-ground, even on planks put across barrels, I could—*mutatis mutandis*—bring the highest enjoyment to the masses, cultured and uncultured, with Calderon's plays. Forgive my plain speaking, it shows my sincere affection. I realise one might say this kind of thing with friendlier phrases and more attractively. I am content now to have got something off my chest. More soon.

381 To FRIEDRICH JACOBI†

Weimar,
7th March 1808.

Friends can often differ greatly, so it is most refreshing when we find we can both unreservedly enjoy the same thing. This is indeed the case with your present to me . . .

The strange pamphlets you sent me at the same time, are less exhilarating. Thinking about Rottmann's book I find I am inclined to rate the Dark Ages higher than you do. I tell myself that in my Father's House are many mansions, and the dim cellar below is as

* i.e. to turn into poems.

† Who had sent Goethe a book with lithographs of Dürer's drawings.

much a part of the palace as the platform on the roof. At the moment I am editing and arranging my collected notes for a history of the theory of colour, so I have to concern myself with the history of art, of science, indeed of the world. And it seems to me that even at times that seem dull and voiceless to us, there was still to be heard from man a chorus that the gods could enjoy. It is always a magnificent sight for me to look into the dark, deep striving of mankind. How fine the individual peoples and races look who guard and carry on a frail but sacred flame of thought! And how splendid are those men in whom this flame flares up once again. I have developed an unbounded respect for Roger Bacon, for instance; but his namesake, the Chancellor, seems to me like Hercules, cleansing the stable of dialectics only to let it be soiled again with empiricism . . .

[Zacharias] Werner has been here almost three months now. We have done all we could to make his tragedy 'Wanda' a success. He has outstanding gifts. His place of birth, his cultural circle and his age explain his adherence to modern Christianity. It was inevitable that German poetry should progress in this direction, and it is the philosophers who are in part responsible if there is anything to blame in it. The ordinary themes which writers of talent usually adopt for their use had all been exhausted and cheapened. Schiller's dramatic characters are noble; to outdo him one had to take what is sacred, which lay to hand in the ideal philosophy.

In the best periods of the Classical Age the sacred had its origin in the beauty of the senses. The Olympian statue of Zeus was needed to perfect the idea of the god. In modern times the sacred rests on moral beauty, opposed, so to speak, to that of the senses. And I don't at all blame you for disliking the mating of what is sacred with beauty or rather pleasure and charm. Even Werner's works show that this leads to a sort of wanton carnival, almost brothel licence, which will even grow worse and worse.

And it is just as logical for the man of talent to seek appreciation for his book and also to be loved and honoured himself, claiming, therefore, to be a kind of teacher and prophet. I can't blame him in the least. Actors, musicians, painters, poets and even scholars seem to bear a strange character, half of the spirit and half of the flesh and appear like fools, indeed almost like knaves, like men with some *levis notae macula* to ordinary people bound to the world of reality from which they sprang. Why should a strange caste, thus handicapped, not produce some astute people who realise that the

only way out of this difficulty is to call themselves Brahmins, if not Brahma himself?

Werner's Luther-play (*Die Weihe der Kraft*) is one of the most fantastic performances ever seen. But can you blame Iffland for being tempted into acting the role of Luther? He so often plays the rogue and the fool and lowers himself in the eyes of the public that sees nothing but the story; now at last he can appear as the Protestant saint, singing 'A Safe Stronghold' and making an appeal to 'German Strength' in spite of the fact that this went to the devil on the 14th October [1806] because the Germans lacked any sense. . .

382 To Mme de STAËL

*Carlsbad,
26th May 1808.*

A number of circumstances combined to make it harder this time for me to leave home, and the thought that I should not see you, dear friend, on your way through, contributed not a little to those feelings.

But I had to resign myself to this, as to so much else. And I have spent ten days now in the most delightful spring, made all the lovelier here by the contrasts. The blossom, the fresh green of the trees, the high meadows, seem all the lovelier among dark rocks, sombre firwoods, and near grey wooden buildings. And now, just as I begin to feel happy again, my difficulties are renewed by your very friendly invitation to come to Dresden.

Let me be quite honest! Nothing would have kept me from coming to see you and renewing those happy hours I formerly spent at your side, if you had summoned me to some lonely mountain castle where I could have hoped to find you living tranquilly with a few intimate friends, and to spend some days among you. But then I recall that important city, rich with precious works of art, and in a splendid countryside, and see you the centre of an eager group. And I already find the object of my journey frustrated, I feel the obstacles to my talking with ease, the occasions for misunderstandings, and I depart disgruntled.

So, best of friends, let me remain in my solitude, devoting many an hour to thoughts of you and eager wishes for you to enjoy Dresden, to relish the rest of your journey and to remember me in Weimar too.

Do give your views soon on us honest Germans! We deserve to

be stimulated and encouraged by your good will as a friendly neighbour and half-compatriot and to see ourselves in such a charming mirror.

So allow me to do what I already longed to do after reading 'Corinne', to express in writing and at length my lively interest in yourself, Madame, and in your writings, my respect and my admiration.

My best greetings to your companion and all those with you.

383 To AUGUST VON GOETHE*

*Carlsbad,
3rd June 1808.*

The postal secretary handed me your letter of 23rd May this morning on my way to the well-room. It was a special joy to me as I've been thirsting for letters these past few days. Apart from a laconic note from your Mother and a letter from Cotta in Leipzig, I have not heard from a single friend all the time I've been here. We got here on the 15th of last month. I feel very well, better than I've felt for a long time, and I get up the hills quite as I used to do . . .

You can imagine what an exquisite charm there is in the spring in Carlsbad, especially this year with such wonderful weather. The trees in blossom, the fresh yellow-green among and against the old grey rocks and the dark fir-woods—it made a delightful picture. But now the blossom is over and it has taken on the more earnest look of summer.

The walls of our rooms which you remember as white look very cheerful now, broken up into coloured panels with gay outlines. It reminds me of a decoration I have seen in the Amtmann's house . . .

At first we found only the Carlsbad residents here. I have not mixed with the few visitors. The pretty little woman and Mr Mattoni were asking after you . . .

Prices are higher on the whole than last year. But it's because the paper currency has depreciated; for 100 Saxon gulden we get 216 florins in paper money.

A good many visitors are gradually arriving. There are 73 names already on the list of arrivals. The company promises to be very large; and there are a few horses here that would make you keen to ride.

* Now studying law at Heidelberg.

But the hot spring isn't behaving very politely to these visitors hurrying towards it; on the contrary it's giving a lot of trouble to those put in charge of it . . .

We are living on in our usual way, quiet and occupied perhaps rather more temperately in everything than a year ago, especially in the matter of wine. By the way, I'm glad to notice from your letter that you are being cautious about this drink that has become such a general habit and is more active than we think against a reasoned, happy and busy life.

And I am pleased with you for not attending too many lectures. When we're studying, everything depends on mastering what we want to make our own as we go along. If we get overwhelmed with knowledge handed down to us, we grow either dull or disgruntled and are greatly tempted to throw the whole thing over.

I am also very pleased your studies too are taking a historical turn. It is fascinating as well as instructive to learn how, through man, conditions in this world have gradually evolved, what has been lost, what remains, and what lives actively on. A young man who is fortunate enough so to comprehend the past, thereby acquires the understanding of riper years and prepares himself for a life of contentment. General ideas then come naturally for everything repeats itself within the earthly sphere.

I am extremely glad you are following your own bent in this line of study. For then I need not fear you might be taken in by any of the philosophical or religious eccentricities that nowadays confuse many a good brain in Germany though they lead to nothing in the end but abstruse conceit. Live wisely and contentedly on the segment of the globe to which your kind fate brings you; in any case there are enough spirals and still stranger curves.

Give my kindest regards to Herr Hofrat Thibaut, and thank him very warmly from me. Your good star is at work here too, getting you introduced into University ways by such a thorough and pleasant teacher.

If you haven't heard him play the pianoforte yet, see that you manage to do so. You'll feel admiration and liking for him at this instrument too.

Find out if there will be any lectures, possibly next winter, on Spittler's 'Outline History of the States of Europe'. It has just been republished by our good Sartorius; he has brought it up to the present exceedingly well. A course like that would introduce you to modern world-history and give you an idea of the various forms of

government. It would make clear to you the relationships, then and now, curious and strange, among the states of Europe, and would be very useful to you for the further study of their past history.

You will be continuing to go out and discover the country round about without any urging from me. I wasn't lucky enough to spend the happy student years in such a wonderful district and remarkable neighbourhood. I spent three years in stony Leipzig that lies in a plain and near the marshes, though not in them. You will be thankful later on when the fruits ripen one after the other to have these blessings too showered on you.

It is a very kind gesture on Berger's part to come and see you. You didn't enclose the prescription; I don't need it now and hope I never shall. Who knows where you'll meet him again some day, that semi-student ever on the move. But you will have many good and happy memories in common.

Remember me to the Voss family and thank our Professor very specially for his letter to Riemer. We heard pleasant things about you in it too. And ask him to write to me soon. A friendly word from outside does a world of good in this solitude.

As there's still room, I'll add some Carlsbad news . . .

The road to Eger has grown a good bit. The one from Prague has stuck at the inn where it was when you saw it. It's still a magnificent walk there, especially in the evening when the sun is setting. But I'm mostly to be found on the Chotek Road, the nearest and handiest to the Castle Waters I take. The remarkable variety of the countryside always astonishes one, however well one knows it. It seems to me at the moment like a most interesting fairy-tale one often heard and now listens to once again. One's astonishment has lost its edge, but one goes on admiring, hardly knowing how one feels.

Up till now the weather has been fine all the time; just passing thunderstorms and rain, and often whole days serenely cloudless.

We have already finished a good many things and started others and we have also read Cicero's letters in Wieland's translation, Spittler's 'History of the States of Europe' and Friedrich Schlegel on the 'Language and Wisdom of the Indians'.

Mme de Staël has invited me to Dresden; she is staying there at present. For several reasons, however, I could not obey this summons.

Now you know as much about Riemer and me as if you were living here with us. Let us hear from you again soon.

*Carlsbad,
2nd July 1808.*

I knew you would be glad to find a letter from me waiting in Lauchstädt, so I hurried to write there. Thanks, too, for letting me know at once of your arrival. I'm still in very good health and only wish you too could make a complete recovery soon. If you take my advice, you'll make a journey to Leipzig as soon as you can. Go and see Dr Kappe, give him my best respects and explain your case to him. He is sure to give you good advice, and you've the whole long summer to follow it, instead of dragging yourself about as you do now, feeling unwell. Tell me what you think of this plan or rather carry it out and write to me from Leipzig.

My circle here up till now has been small but choice. The Ziegesars have left, but we had many happy hours together. Fräulein Sylvie is a dear, as she always is, and we were lucky with all our outings, though it rained every day. That's what happens in this hill-country; you can have rain and fine weather quite close, almost at the same time. But what will you say when I tell you that Riemer's found such a pretty little charmer, and one with a carriage and horses too; she drives him out in it. And I suppose I'll hear what you have been up to in that line.

You mustn't let it worry you that they've gossiped about you to Mme de Staël. That's always the way of the world. Everybody grudges everybody else his good points, whatever they are; so he lessens or denies them or even asserts the opposite. So enjoy what fortune has given you, and what you have earned and try to keep it. We shall go on loving each other and arranging things better and better so that we can live after our own fashion without bothering about anyone else.

I have had a letter from Thibaut and one from Voss, each agreeing with the other and with what we know of August. He's managing quite nicely; and one can't blame his living in a small circle and not wanting to go much into society. Let him spend his leisure from his studies happily and pleasantly.

I'm quite content if things go well on the whole at the theatre, there'll never be a lack of quarrels over details . . .

I took advantage of a chance to send a parcel in waxcloth to Leipzig for you. You'll have got it by now, I suppose. There was nothing precious in it, only a couple of best quality smoked tongues though.

Carlsbad is beginning to fill up. You can imagine how strange

it looked up till now when I tell you that at the first ball the women danced together; there have been very few people in the Rooms in the evening. The theatre company is the same as last year.

I'll finish with the news that dear Marianne [von Eybenberg] has arrived too, charming and intelligent as ever. Farewell now. Don't forget me, write soon.

385 To SYLVIE VON ZIEGESAR *

*Carlsbad,
22nd July 1808,
at six in the morning.*

I don't know myself how I got here. The night was splendid, the road as good as a road can be, the horses sturdy, the coachman a good one. In my thoughts I had stayed behind with you [in Teplitz], and I didn't notice our leaving. At last I slept off and on, and the dear little oval face seemed to be with me in all its friendliness and charm; not a sign of the round one. Now I am doing some things for you, in a hurry. Riemer is cutting the pens and I am enclosing a miserable little bunch of them in exchange for the beautiful, rich, curly gift. But you shall certainly not always excel me in everything.

The nourishment for the body I wanted to send is a failure. The tongues are mouldy, the crabs—they are fine here—I am advised not to send because they would go bad in this heat. So I must think of mental nourishment; as you know it's specially effective at a distance. So here is; a sonnet from Riemer who sends his respects; a little bottle of eau de Cologne to fill your vinaigrette from, a little box of Franz Mayrisch's peppermints, item a pinch of tea, also some other dried plants, but not meant for infusing.

The coachman wants to be paid off, or I could write on and on. Give my best respects to your good parents and all your circle. Please send a word or two by Frau von Bock, especially the one I have already begged for. Adieu, a thousand times, dear, dear Sylvie.

386 To SYLVIE VON ZIEGESAR

*Weimar,
21st September 1808.*

I did not know dearest Sylvie what was in store for me when the courier called me away from your friendly valley. My beloved Mother's death has greatly saddened my return to Weimar. I can

* Daughter of the Gotha Minister.

only write a word or two to-day, asking you to think of me and hoping that the sharp instruments enclosed with this note will not cut the fabric of our friendship.

387 To CHRISTIANE VON GOETHE*

*Erfurt,
4th October 1808.*

I must write a note before I leave Erfurt and thank you for having made me go there. I didn't get to the play, but everything went very well afterwards. I waited upon the Emperor, who was most gracious and conversed with me for some considerable time. Now I am off to the festivities in Weimar and wish you were with me. Sometimes I feel annoyed with you for obstinately sticking to your own journey. But then I think, it's sure to turn out well, so many things do. Farewell. Greetings to your companion [Caroline] and to all friends.

388 To KNEBEL

*Weimar,
25th November 1808.*

Many thanks, my friend, for your kind and friendly greetings. I had meant to visit you, but various reasons made this impossible. It was only after the Emperors and Princes had gone that I realised I had been away for a whole summer. I found a number of gaps in affairs and undertakings, and it wasn't so easy to pick up all the threads. So far I've made little headway in important matters.

Our Wednesdays are in full swing again. I am reading the 'Nibelungenlied', but I feel like a young professor or like a cook whose whole life is spent dishing up something palatable for a few hours. However, I find it very valuable and useful, as otherwise I might never have read it through, still less thought so much about it, as I have to do now, to make it more vivid and enjoyable with comments and parallels. The value of the poem seems to increase as one studies it, and it is worth while taking the trouble to rescue it and show its merit clearly. For its modern admirers, Herr Goerres and Company, shroud it in even thicker mists, obscuring the whole country to prevent any critical sport, much the same as people do to the water to catch fish. I have had some new ideas, fine enough and

* Who had gone to Frankfort to settle affairs after the death of Goethe's mother.

amusing on their own account, though some of them may not be quite suitable. For instance I borrowed the idea of Voss's maps (for Homer, Hesiod and Aeschylus) and drew a map for the 'Nibelungen', which started off some interesting observations. I have paid great attention not only to the subject, the themes, and the technique of the poem, but I have also closely studied the costume and other details. This helps one to get nearer to the date and origin of the poem. I will tell you all this some nice cosy winter evening, once I get it clearer.

Though our modern religious mediaevalists produce and reproduce much that is unpalatable, I don't let this mislead me. Their enthusiasm and energy brings to light a good deal that is valuable and makes up for the mediocre modern stuff . . .

389 To FRIEDRICH RIEMER *

Jena,
19th May 1809.

I look on yesterday's happening as a fortunate one; for the ill-humour to which you have latterly given yourself over and which, I must confess, has severely tried my patience, was bound sooner or later to lead to a scene. But I am prepared to be calm and ready for us to make another attempt together, seeing the trouble has now come to a head, and you have had the unpleasant experience of seeing how far it might lead us. Meanwhile your duty must be to aim at self-control and indeed at independence. Look out for some post among the many that you would fill with distinction, if only to strengthen your conviction that every situation in life demands a certain duty of us; our own worth consists in our unfailing and reliable response to the needs of others.

All I shall say of this particular case is to recommend to you the careful reading of the manuscripts before they go to press. But this, like all the rest, will be easy if you effectively concentrate your fine understanding on the matter in hand. So let us meet next time as though nothing had happened.

390 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

Weimar,
10th July 1809.

Your letter of the 30th that I ought to have got by the courier arrived by the post to-day, and I'm answering it at once.

* Goethe's main secretary, formerly August's tutor.

I am very pleased to hear you are well and enjoying this beautiful season in Heidelberg. I should very much like you to take a trip up the Rhine during the vacation. I should be glad to refund your expenses for it. Be sure you have the right clothes and things beforehand, for though these excursions by water are fun, it is easy to catch cold before you notice it. All you see and all that happens on this trip will be of great use and a joy to you your whole life. You are already a busy diarist, so I should like you to write a travel-journey, not to describe the countryside, but only so as to have definite notes of the different places, inns, prices, present conditions, opinions, etc. Jottings of this sort tell us and others a great deal and are invaluable later on when we come back to these places. Write to me now and then on your journey; there are posts going from everywhere.

I hope you will enjoy your return-journey through Franconia. I have spent the summer between Jena and Weimar. Your mother has just made a pleasure-trip to Jena. Good-bye, with greetings to all friends.

391 To ROCHLITZ*

Weimar,
15th November 1809.

Your very kind letter is a most handsome reward for my confidence in asking for your opinion on my latest work, and I thank you most warmly for it. It seems right that people who like what is beautiful and good should say a cheering word to me about this book, for it represents a sustained and sincere effort, at least, and has in many senses cost me dear. When I recollect the circumstances in which this little work was finished, it seems like a miracle for it to be there on paper.

I have not read it through in print; I usually put that off. A published work is like a finished fresco; one can't alter it once it has dried. As far as it is still fresh in my mind, and in the light of your observations, I should like to improve the shading for the sake of linking it up and harmonising it. But I can't do that; so I console myself with the thought that the ordinary reader will not note these deficiencies, and the artistic connoisseur who feels these needs will supplement and complete the work for himself as he reads it . . .

* Literary and musical critic and writer in Leipzig; had now sent Goethe a review of the *Elective Affinities*.

19th January 1810.

Dear Sir, My pleasure at making the acquaintance of your brother has been still more heightened by the honour it has brought me of a letter from you. I am very glad to be able to send the [Meistersinger] manuscripts which I have borrowed from the Duke's Library in my own name. I enclose a copy of the slip I signed for them.

I should indeed be pleased if you found some important passages in these two volumes; when you decipher and interpret them you will add to your merit in this branch of German literature and thereby increase the gratitude of us all . . .

Weimar,
5th February 1810.

Your box, dear Bettina, a ball full of good things, came flying in here and made an enormous sensation. My wife shall write herself to say how she had been worrying about her costume for the masquerade, and how delighted she was when she opened the box. But your dear letter was the most precious jewel of it all. These few words shall bring you my thanks for your never-failing love, your lasting thought of the living and your loyalty to the dead. Your Albrecht Dürer hangs on the wall, well restored and framed, and a delight to all friends of art and patriots!

Farewell; let me hear from you again soon.

Weimar,
19th February 1810.

My dear Carl, here are your drawings back; you have done so well, I feel sure you could attempt something more difficult. So here are some historical pictures that will interest you; pick out single figures from them, if you think the whole picture too complicated and difficult. But if you give time to it, you probably could copy the whole pictures too. For they are nice, and you would enjoy having them in your collection of studies. Greetings to your dear parents. I hope to see Jena again soon.

* Who with his brother Wilhelm was the founder of German philology, collector and editor of fairy-tales, legends, etc.

† Aged about thirteen.

Jena,
30th March 1810.

. . . August is coming back to you and I am pleased with him in many ways, but there's something strange about the whole thing. When I think it all over, I find I'd rather he were in Heidelberg than in Jena. He's already getting somewhat humdrum—I never had such a clear idea of this word before. I don't want to spoil his summer and you needn't let him notice anything. But if it goes on, he must go somewhere else at Michaelmas, to Göttingen or somewhere. There's plenty of time before then, so we can talk it over. But I am telling you it now, because there isn't much more time for me to keep things to myself.

You'll be getting a whole box of beautiful double carnations; see they are not planted too close together, they are apt to spread. Send the box back.

I'm putting in some Russian rhubarb seeds too; you can have half of them planted now in a well-prepared plot and the other half in May in another. We can talk later about how to treat these plants.

I hope the little hat has arrived safely too . . .

Best wishes to the members of the singing lesson. We must have a really happy Thursday when I come back. Try to find out if an oratorio or something of the sort is to be given in Holy Week; I'll fit in with that . . .

Jena,
27th April 1810.

It needs an effort, dear sympathetic friend, to speak again after a long silence. But the kindness of your words invites me to it, and I cannot remain completely dumb.

We have been rather *labouring* along this last while, just doing what had to be done, without any joy in it beyond feeling it was done. So the lovely, sometimes very lovely, days passed without either inward satisfaction or hopes of any outward reward.

There was another ominous thing too, though I think it was only the result of the carping melancholy of loneliness. Not only the general public, but even those who like me, my friends of both sexes, and even my nearest and dearest seemed to me like the tyrant who throws the goblet into the whirlpool again and again, till at last the poor diver fails to return with it.*

* An allusion to Schiller's ballad *The Diver*.

After this daring simile I am sure you will excuse me if I write little else. Our business here will occupy us for a few weeks yet. Then I will make all speed to Carlsbad, for my fairly comfortable condition at present may only be deceptive and give place without warning to a most unpleasant reality.

Meanwhile I really must come and see my dear ones in Weimar again. For I find it absolutely essential to shake off certain melancholy influences. Just imagine, nothing has given me any pleasure for some time now but writing verses one could not read to anybody! After all, that is a pathological state, when you come to look at it, and the sooner one is rid of it, the better. My kindest regards; remember me and forgive me.

397 To CARL AUGUST

*Jena,
7th May 1810.*

If your Highness could only know what a good influence our last nocturnal conversation has had on me since and how much I long for others like it, you would feel how your yesterday's letter has affected me. I spent the evening covering several pages with a description of my condition, but this morning when the messenger called for them, I could not send them off. Our hidden burdens, our secret ailments, our silent suffering don't look at all attractive on paper. Why should not I owe the permission to go straight from here to Carlsbad to your goodness and forbearance alone, like so much else?

All the business I had to attend to is done either by letter or in person to the best of my ability and, I hope, to your Highness's satisfaction.

I am very unwilling to ask to be excused coming to Weimar, but my last trip to Hohlstedt to see Privy Councillor Voigt was so bad for me. I can't say more without once again starting the old tale I wrote yesterday.

[Professor] Voigt is due any time; my advice about sorting out the seeds would be of little use. May I perhaps send [the Court gardener] Wagner, whom I would have brought with me as he has a special knowledge of these matters; and will your Highness kindly let me know in writing what else is to be done and considered. It will be so easy for you and probably be done in the town itself. I shall not fail to arrange and think things over to the best of my ability.

As I write this I feel tempted to cancel this sheet by setting off to Weimar. But my last experience and the recent example of our good Starck deter me. So my most earnest wish is for your Highness to extricate me from this embarrassment and to assure me I have not incurred your displeasure.

The medal of the Pope intrigues me. Pius the Sixth might have got lost in my garden, but I can't understand it of Pius the Seventh . . .

The 'Farbenlehre' is still on the stocks and is still giving me a good deal of anxiety and trouble now, in the final stages where things have to be fitted together. I hope your Highness will graciously accept a reference I have made in the chapter entitled 'Author's Confession', where I have said in so many words how much I owe you.*

398 To COUNT REINHARDT†

Jena,
14th May 1810.

The portfolio has reached me here through Herr Zimmer and has given me great pleasure. Just a few remarks in haste from the many one could make.

It is impossible to lay down what form anyone's favourite interest is to take or how he is to develop his native gifts. Besides everything that brings a past age to life again for us is of great value, especially if it is done in a truly historical and critical spirit.

That is why I give high praise to the endeavours of the young man who has had these drawings made. He has set to work most thoroughly; I must say his groundplan of Cologne Cathedral is one of the most interesting things in the field of architecture that I have seen for a long time.

The outline in perspective shows how unthinkable would have been the completion of this vast undertaking; in silent and wondering contemplation one sees this dream of the Tower of Babel there on the bank of the Rhine . . .

Of course, to do something of this kind, one must be absorbed by this one passion. I have been interested in these things too in the past; I more or less worshipped the Minster of Strassburg, and I still

* Carl August at once agreed to Goethe's request.

† Who had sent Goethe a portfolio with Boisserée's plans and other drawings of Cologne Cathedral.

think of its façade as I used to, as greater than that of Cologne Cathedral . . .

Herr Boisserée has written me a very handsome sensible letter, which with the drawings leads me to like him already. I am enclosing a short note for him, asking him here at Michaelmas. Please be kind enough to pass on the first, communicable, part of this letter to him . . .

399 To KNEBEL

Teplitz,
30th August 1810.

My dear friend, the Duke's people will bring you these few words with my best thanks for your latest letter. I was so glad to get your friendly greetings.

I can give a good report of myself; the waters here are suiting me. It was high time too; for I arrived from Carlsbad morose and out of temper. The last fortnight of bad weather had done a good deal to spoil the charm of the place. Here the weather's perfect again and it's such cheerful and open country on the Southern slopes of the Erzgebirge. The so-called 'Mittelgebirge' opposite is an extraordinary pseudo-volcanic mountain-mass of basalt and slaty porphyry. The 'Bilinerfels' is a particularly magnificent peak with its vast, severe, stark shape, picturesque in some parts. We spent a very happy day at the foot and are bringing some sketches back.

The country round about is studded with small towns, country seats, villages, monasteries and so on; there's always somewhere to drive to. The people complain of the lack of society, but I have nothing but good to say of Teplitz in this respect. Of course, the Duke being here means I see many people and visit many places that I might not otherwise get to know.

The Duke is well and the baths suit him. I only hope that all this hunting and other violent exercise doesn't undo some of the good . . .

I have made one very interesting acquaintance, the King of Holland*; he is staying here in the house. He is rather like his brother in looks. His character shows real kindness of heart; I hope to tell you more about him. I am visiting him frequently. He is very friendly and informal, with a really royal openness of manner; as Sophocles says 'it befits a king alone to say what he thinks'. When

* Louis Bonaparte.

you get to know him better, you see that the reason for his abdication is something he was born with.

There's just room to say a word about the Prince de Ligne. At seventy-eight he is as much a courtier and man of the world, as gay and frivolous as ever. His charm enlivens any society he happens to be in . . .

400 To CARL AUGUST

Weimar,
8th October 1810.

Your Highness has so often given proof of your gracious care for me and mine that I was firmly resolved to leave whatever favour my son might receive, to your own will and intention. I hope your Highness will, however, forgive me a premature request to which circumstances now oblige me. I greatly long to see my son in happier state by next winter and relieved from an awkward situation. It rests, however, entirely on your Highness's gracious, wise discretion whether this wish will be realised.

GOETHE.

ENCLOSURE

Allow me to make this humble request of your Highness with my most heartfelt thanks if it should graciously be conceded, and confident resignation if it should meet with a refusal.

It concerns my son August who will soon have completed his 21st year and for whom I beg to solicit the post of 'Kammerassessor'. *

Let me briefly mention some details. He has been instructed since his youth in a wide range of subjects and he spent a year and a half in Heidelberg, studying, principally, jurisprudence as the basis of an official career. He has now been in Jena continuing these studies and acquiring some knowledge of finance and economics. His conduct has been regular and laudable. All this, however, would not lead me to make this request, for he means to remain in Jena for some time and then take a country post with a revenue officer, in order to get to know the whole business in all its stages.

My somewhat premature wish springs rather from the awkward situation in which my son finds himself in Jena. Your Highness is familiar with the various students' organisations, constituted as 'Landmannschaften' or secret orders, congregations, circles and drinking parties, which oppose each other, cause squabbles and outbursts, are then broken up and quashed, but never finally

* A post in the Finance-Department.

stamped out. My son, with my knowledge, got to know these associations intimately in Heidelberg; because of his position as my son, he holds himself quite aloof from them all in Jena. He stands, therefore, completely alone and has to confront all parties; however ably he conducts himself, this is an uncomfortable and dangerous position.

In addition to this, he is as a student excluded from the 'Resource', a society of people of position, which does not accept members who are still studying.

This is what moves me to beg your Highness graciously to grant him now what you may have in mind for him later. Once lifted out of the rank and file of students, he would have no further worries and could spend his winter-evenings in the company of professors, officials, merchants and others who already know something of life, and so he would learn and acquire much. Besides it will be a considerable stimulus for him if your Highness puts before him now the goal he has to reach. His nature is a practical one and he has insight and acumen beyond his years. I have already seen in domestic matters that he knows how to carry out a task assigned to him, quietly and dependably. He is also faithfully and naturally devoted to your Highness and to whatever has the good fortune to belong to you. He shows no sign of wanting to leave the Duchy and will easily make himself familiar with tasks here and be serviceable and useful about what is to be done in all its details. He will be glad to submit himself to any examination.

With fullest confidence and respect . . . *

* The Duke agreed to this request and at the same time made Goethe the present of a pair of carriage horses.

1810-1816

Erhabner Geist, du gabst mir, gabst mir alles
Warum ich bat, du hast mir nicht umsonst
Dein Angesicht im Feuer zugewendet.
Gabst mir die herrliche Natur zum Königreich,
Kraft sie zu fühlen, zu geniessen. Nicht
Kalt staunenden Besuch erlaubst du nur,
Vergönnest mir, in ihre tiefe Brust,
Wie in den Busen eines Freunds, zu schauen.

Faust, I. Teil, Wald und Höhle

Sublime spirit, you gave me, gave me everything I asked
for. Not for nothing did you turn your countenance
towards me in the flames. You gave me glorious nature
for my kingdom, with strength to feel and to enjoy it.
You did not merely grant me a cold wondering visit there,
but let me look deep into nature's breast as into the heart
of a friend.

Faust, Part I, Forest and Cavern

GOETHE'S thoughts, about this period, frequently reverted to his childhood and youth. He had already in the previous year started to collect material for his autobiography and in 1811 he published the first books of *Aus meinem Leben, Wahrheit und Dichtung*; by 1814 all the volumes were in the hands of the public except the very last one which was published posthumously. As *Wahrheit und Dichtung* ends with Goethe's departure for Weimar, he began in 1814, as a continuation of it, the *Italienische Reise*, completed two years later. From 1815 until his death Goethe edited a periodical on art and literature, *Kunst und Altertum*. Among the large number of literary and scientific essays written in the years 1810-16 were two on Shakespeare, *Shakespeare und kein Ende* and *Shakespeare als Theaterdichter*. New ballads too belong to this period and the first songs of the *West-östlicher Divan*, a collection of two hundred or so poems, slightly imitating the style of the 14th century Persian poet Hafiz. Some are love poems, occasioned by Goethe's affection for Marianne (the Suleika of the poems), his friend J. J. Willemer's young wife. Goethe spent some time with the Willemers in Frankfort and Heidelberg in the summers 1814 and 1815. The only other considerable poetical work of Goethe from this period is the festival play *Epimenides Erwachen*, written to be performed in Berlin to celebrate the victory over Napoleon. There were however delays and the performance did not take place until 30th March 1815; by then Napoleon had returned from Elba and war once more threatened Europe.

The years from the Russian campaign to the end of the Napoleonic wars had been an anxious time for Weimar as for the rest of Europe. In April 1813 Napoleon once more crossed the Rhine and advanced against the Prussian and Russian allies. The threat of war again drew near Weimar and Goethe hesitated to follow the urgent advice of his doctors to take the cure at Teplitz. At last however he yielded to the persuasions of his wife and son; he returned from Teplitz in mid-August. Soon afterwards, when Napoleon had been defeated at Leipzig, and the allies were pursuing him westwards, large forces again passed through Weimar. The Weimar Corps joined the allies in the campaign in Belgium and Carl August took part in the peace negotiations in Paris. From there he went with the Czar and the King of Prussia to London. He spent a month travelling about England, visiting scientists and scholars, inspecting factories, admiring the beauty of the country houses and the Oxford Colleges. He did not return to Weimar until September, but had previously arranged to take part in the Congress of Vienna. He invited Sartorius, Professor of History at the Hanoverian University of Göttingen, to accompany him as his adviser, and proposed to Goethe a meeting in Baden near Vienna. Goethe however decided against going to Vienna and went instead to take the waters at Wiesbaden. He visited

Frankfort for the first time since his mother's death. In mid-August he met the Duke at Mainz and they stayed for a week together in Wiesbaden. Goethe spent the latter half of September in Frankfort and then went on to Heidelberg. Carl August meantime had gone with his daughter-in-law, who was the sister of the Czar, and Professor Sartorius to Vienna and there met with a considerable measure of success. He obtained from the Congress an increase of territory with a population of 50,000, the rank of Grand Duke and the title of Royal Highness.

During these epoch-making events Goethe's life was for the most part unchanged; to his other scientific interests he added the study of fossils. His official duties, and the management of the theatre took up much of his time. In April 1813 he had to reconcile himself to a great disappointment: he had to admit that the time he had spent trying to make a practical success of the silver mines at Ilmenau had been spent in vain; it was decided to close the workings. Yet the official duties, research in various branches of science, and his literary work still left him time for an ever-growing correspondence.

New names appear from year to year; greatest of all, Beethoven, whom Goethe met at Teplitz where they both took the waters in 1811 and 1812; Sartorius von Waltershausen, Professor of History at Göttingen, and diplomat; B. G. Niebuhr, author of a standard work on Roman history; Caroline Pichler, a popular woman novelist in Vienna; C. G. Körner, once Schiller's most faithful friend and father of Theodor, a young poet who fell in the 1813 war; Arthur Schopenhauer, the philosopher, who was to publish some years later his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, a book to become of great importance for German philosophy only in the second half of the nineteenth century, though Goethe had already had a good opinion of its author and was glad when an opportunity was offered him to recommend the young philosopher. It gave him special pleasure as Arthur's mother, Johanna Schopenhauer, a novelist, had been one of the first ladies in Weimar to show friendliness towards Goethe's wife after their marriage. On the whole Christiane's position improved somewhat after she was formally married, though many continued to treat her as an inferior. Bettina Brentano, for instance, recently married to Achim von Arnim, was so insulting in her behaviour when she met Frau von Goethe at the Autumn Exhibition of 1811 that Goethe declined to admit her to his house again. Frau von Stein tried to intervene, but Goethe remained firm and it was not until fifteen years later—much later than Bettina asserts in her book—that he would have anything to do with her; their old friendship was never restored.

Christiane von Goethe fell ill at the end of May 1816 and died on June 6th after a week of great suffering. Goethe's feelings on her death are expressed in his short poem, *Epitaph*, 6. *Juni* 1816; 'O sun, thou seekst in vain to pierce the murky clouds. Now all I get from life is to mourn my loss.'

Weimar,
25th October 1810.

Here I am settled in Weimar again, dear Bettina, and I ought to have thanked you long ago for your dear letters that have kept arriving, and especially for your good wishes of August 27th. But instead of telling you how things are with me—and there is not much to say—I come with a friendly request. I know you won't stop liking to write to me and I won't stop liking to read your letters; so you could do me a great favour at the same time. Let me confess I have begun to write my 'Confessions'. It's uncertain as yet whether it will turn out to be a novel or history. But in any case I need your help. My good Mother is dead now, as well as many others who might have recalled for me a past I have largely forgotten. But you spent a happy time with my dear Mother, you often heard her tales and anecdotes, and it is all stored up in your vivid memory, which can bring it to life again. So do sit down at once and write down whatever has to do with me and mine, and you will make me both happy and grateful. Send something from time to time and tell me about yourself and your circle too. Love me till we meet again.

Weimar,
22nd January 1811.

I have been greatly involved in a number of tasks and arrangements since I came back from taking the waters. I had to go to Jena for a few days to get my debts of letters and literature more or less paid. I am making use of an hour of solitude here to thank you, my dear friend, for your kindly letters. Let me tell you about a number of things in reply.

It was a somewhat difficult task to produce an Italian opera in our theatre, and cost me time and trouble. But I felt rewarded in the end for it went off well and to everyone's satisfaction. And then I found myself looking round for fresh difficulties—it's always the way. My official and court duties take up most of these short days; and night, like winter, is no friend of activity. I have done but little that could be shown. My biography of Hackert is being printed, and you will quite enjoy it. At least it shows a life that was active, important and happy, and that built itself up again after misfortune.

I am very glad that my 'Pandora' has led you to wish to be with

me again. That reminded me of a flattering reproach a friend once made me when we were young; 'What you live is better than what you write.' And I should like it if that were still true . . .

403 To BEETHOVEN

Carlsbad,
25th June 1811.

Honoured Sir, your friendly letter which has reached me through Herr von Oliva has given me great pleasure. I am deeply grateful to you for the views you express in it, views which I assure you I can heartily reciprocate. For I have never heard either professionals or amateurs play any of your compositions without wishing I could admire your own performance at the pianoforte and rejoice in your outstanding talent. Good Bettina Brentano deserves the interest you have shown her. She speaks of you with delight and the most eager affection and counts the hours spent with you among the happiest of her life.

The music you sent for my 'Egmont' will be waiting for me at home; I am grateful for it already. I have heard it praised in several quarters, and I hope to be able to produce it with the play this winter in our theatre. It will give great pleasure to me as well as to your numerous admirers in the district. And I trust I have understood Herr Oliva rightly in hoping your projected journey may bring you to us. I hope your visit will come at a time when the Court as well as the entire music-loving public are there. I am certain you will have a reception worthy of your merit and your character. No-one, however, can be more keenly interested in this than I am. Let me commend myself to your kind memory and send my good wishes with my sincerest thanks for all the good I already owe you.

404 To WILHELM GRIMM

Weimar,
15th August 1811.

Many thanks for sending me the translation of the Danish poems. I have long had a very high opinion of these relics of Nordic poetry and in the past I have often read single examples with great enjoyment. Here, however, you have given us a great deal that was hitherto unknown, and your happy treatment has made an organic whole of many separate parts . . .

You may be sure I take a lively interest in your work, and am one of those who sincerely enjoy what you gain for yourself and for us in this field.

My sincere wishes and kindest regards to your brother.

405 To Frau VON STEIN

Weimar,
28th September 1811.

Dear friend, let me offer myself in exchange for the dainty little creature and the delicious fruit you sent. So I hope you will excuse me from answering that little note [of Bettina's] until I can think freely and happily again of the writer. Please keep the enclosed a secret.*

406 To F. A. WOLF

Weimar,
28th September 1811.

My dear friend, we never ought to let slip an opportunity to break a long silence, so I am not going to refuse a letter of recommendation to this young man who is going to Berlin. His name is Schopenhauer, and his mother is Frau Hofrat Schopenhauer who has lived here among us for some years. He has studied for a while in Göttingen and as far as I know—mostly on the word of others—has taken his work seriously. He seems to have changed his studies and occupations more than once. You will very easily find out his particular subject and how far he has progressed in it, if, out of kindness to me, you spare him a few moments and let him see you again from time to time if he deserves it . . .

What I am busy on is always an open secret. I am glad my 'Farbenlehre' is having a good effect as an apple of discord. My opponents are nibbling round it like carp at a big apple thrown into their pond. They can do what they like, these gentlemen, but at least they won't get this book out of the history of physics. That's all I ask; for the rest, let it have what influence it can, now or later . . .

You will have heard our good Wieland has met with a serious accident. He was injured, and his younger daughter even more severely, when his carriage overturned. They are both getting on fairly well, he much better than was expected at his age. This

* Note on this letter in Frau von Stein's hand: '28th September, when he sent me his "Life" (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*)'.

happening and the attendant circumstances have distressed us all very much.

And now, to make up for that, don't let me have to wait too long to hear you are very well indeed.

407 To G. H. L. NICOLOVIUS*

Weimar,
20th October 1811.

One of the thoughts, serious and awe-inspiring, with which we old people are familiar, is the expectation that those younger than ourselves—and surely with a better right to remain here longer—are often irresistibly torn from us. I too feel deeply the loss of your dear wife. I had often heard her praised and spoken of with affection; everyone who mentioned her showed an enthusiasm that led me even at a distance to feel something of an outstanding, unusual personality. If with all these attractive and noble qualities she was not able to adapt herself to the world around her, this only reminds me of her mother, whose deep and tender nature and fine mind—unusually so for a woman—could never shield her from a certain dissatisfaction with her surroundings. Though latterly I lived far away from her with only the loose bond of a rare exchange of letters, I was conscious of this condition of hers, hardly belonging to the world. And when she died I drew at first some consolation from it.

I never saw my dear niece, but I have always taken a genuine interest in her, as in you and in your dear ones. May you find active comfort in the education and upbringing of those she leaves behind her, and may you long enjoy these images of their mother.

I hope that some day I may have the pleasure of meeting you even at this late stage, when one feels more and more the need of those of whose honest opinions and ceaseless endeavours one can be sure. My sincere regards, and please remember me in your family circle.

408 To CAROLINE PICHLER†

31st March 1812.

Let me thank you at last most warmly for your friendly letter and for your charming way of helping me with my cherished

* Whose wife, daughter of Goethe's sister Cornelia, had just died.

† Novelist in Vienna.

[autograph-]collection, dedicated to the memory of famous people. Your letter shall be put in place, too, among those documents, in alphabetical order like the rest, but with special affection.

Though your eager endeavours failed to secure a line in Mozart's hand, the rest is all the more precious to me. I shall be all the keener to collect, as this instance shows how it is just what is most personal and characteristic that disappears soonest after a man's death. Of his circumstances as of his merits only what is general and as it were bodiless remains . . .

These observations lead us to attach ourselves more and more closely to those people of merit with whom through our good fortune we have established a real relationship. You may be sure I have constantly taken interest in your writings . . .

409 To FRIEDRICH SCHLOSSER *

Weimar,
31st March 1812.

My dear Sir, you will smile perhaps at my beginning all my letters with the same phrase; it is 'Thanks' and thanks again, and I don't know how to vary this expression any more.

The two volumes of the 'Frankfurter Gelehrte Zeitung' [with my contributions] that you have sent, make one thing clear to me again. I realise how necessary it is for me to have a collection of documents relating to the period if I am to attempt an account of my former years. For without them even the most candid memory would find it difficult to imagine and recollect how, shallow, immature and uncouth as I was, I could then have been worth more, than now that I have acquired some depth, maturity and culture. That was an extraordinary period altogether, just as these two volumes present it to us . . .

410 To C. G. KOERNER †

Jena,
23rd April 1812.

I have already received many valued and good things from you; but now, my dear friend, you give me special pleasure with what you have just sent. Your son's plays show his decided talent, which

* Nephew of Goethe's brother-in-law; he had frequently sent documents etc. from Frankfort which Goethe used for his autobiography.

† In Dresden, who had sent two plays by his son Theodore, *Toni* and *Die Suehne*.

in the exuberance of youth has freely and easily produced two fine, agreeable plays. I particularly enjoyed them at the present moment, for we had successfully performed a wonderful play by Calderon, 'Life is a Dream', and were getting stranded on the sandbanks of the most recent dramatic literature. Your friendly contribution will keep us afloat this spring . . .

If your son will send me his plans in future, just in outline, scene by scene, with a word or two on the proposed content, I shall be glad to tell him what I think; for haven't we all chosen wrong material? Haven't we all fallen in love with some unresponsive themes? And have not the best talents thereby wasted time and taken pains in vain?

411 To FRIEDRICH JACOBI

Carlsbad,
10th May 1812.

Your precious gift [of autographs], my very dear old friend, reached me in Jena as I was about to leave for Carlsbad and I am writing to you from there to-day. Herr v. Burgsdorf unfortunately missed me, so I have no detailed news of you and how you are. These pages you have sent are of infinite value to me, for as my mind works only through my senses, distinguished men are magically set before me by their handwriting. I value these documents not so much as a portrait, but as forming a desirable addition or substitute. So send me what you can and get your friends to do the same. People are always ready to give you a sheet of writing like this, that might otherwise be lost; yet anyone whose thoughts in old age take a historical turn knows how to appreciate such things.

Your little book ['Of Things Divine'] was most welcome to me, with its introduction giving the convictions that have remained constant with you from earliest to later years. I was glad to learn the actual *Statum Controversiae* of the many philosophical arguments, whose strange course I too have followed more or less attentively. I owe all this now to your book and would like to give you due thanks for it. But I should be untrue to my old sincerity and frankness if I didn't tell you that the work has made me rather unhappy. I am, after all, like one of the silversmiths of Ephesus, who spent his whole life gazing and wondering at and honouring the marvellous temple of the goddess, making copies of her mysterious images; he could not have found it pleasant when some apostle

sought to impose a new, and especially an imageless God upon the people. So if I had published a book like this to the glory of the great Diana (though I wouldn't, for I am one who likes to live in peace and does not want to stir up others), you would find on the other side of the title-page: 'Man can get to know only what he loves; the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the more forceful, vigorous and lively must be the love, yea the passion.'

You will excuse me from further elaboration of this text. I am sure, you know your own side so well, you must know that of others too.

I should like, with your permission, to say some friendly words about you in the Third Part of the autobiography I am trying to write. It was very soon clear to me that we held divergent views, and we are fortunate if our hope is fulfilled of seeing affection and love make up again and again for our growing differences.

Farewell. Let me hear from you soon. Go on adding to my autograph treasures which have grown considerably since I sent out that printed list.

Greetings to your dear ones, and my respect to General-Secretary Schlichtegroll. May your journey be pleasant for both mind and body.

412 To CHRISTIANE VON GOETHE*

Teplitz,
19th July 1812.

I must let you know how things have been with me up till now. The weather was fine and the roads fairly good, and I was here by noon on Tuesday. I had a most kind and friendly reception; it would look very conceited for me to put down on paper how much distinction and favour I am honoured with here; I'll save all that up for when I see you again.

His Highness the Duke is well and cheerful, Prince Lichnowsky the same as ever, Princess Marianne of Saxony asked for you and sends you her greeting.

The post has been incredibly slow and I didn't get the copy of my poems till the 18th, so you see it took them 14 days to come.† But it all turned out for the best. The Duke sent them at once to her Majesty, and after dinner the Empress requested me most

* In Carlsbad.

† These were poems to the Austrian Empress, wife of Francis I, and to his daughter, Maria Louise, second wife of Napoleon; the latter poem contained an indirect exhortation to Napoleon to give peace to the world.

charmingly to read them to her—the surest sign she was pleased with them. And then there was another pleasant thing too; one of the leading statesmen took me aside and said he was fully aware of the difficulty of my task and was gratified to see how successfully it had been accomplished. John, [who copied them], will be specially pleased at that, for he knows better than anyone else how doubtful I was about it. I had the good fortune to read to the Empress almost every morning. She generally talks too and shows unusual understanding and originality in her comments on matters of the greatest importance. You'll hardly realise her outstanding qualities. Once I've told you certain things, you'll be astonished, almost amazed . . .

Tell his Highness Prince Friedrich [of Gotha] that I am never in Beethoven's company without wishing it were at the 'Golden Ostrich'. I have never seen any artist so concentrated, so forceful, with such depth of feeling. I can well imagine his strangeness in the world.

A thousand greetings to our good Meyer. All good wishes to you.

413 To ZELTER

*Carlsbad,
2nd September 1812.*

. . . I met Beethoven in Teplitz. His talent astounded me, but unfortunately his is a personality of untamed force. He is quite right in finding the world detestable; but that hardly makes it better either for himself or for others. One may excuse and pity him greatly, however, for his hearing is failing; this may do more harm to his sociable than his musical self. He is already laconic by nature and this will make him still more so. A hearty farewell.

414 To DÖBEREINER *

*Jena,
19th November 1812.*

An Antiquarian's Enquiry
to you as a Chemist.

There is an account of a woman who gave her husband poison; he felt ill, but didn't die quickly enough to suit her, so she gave him mercury, and he suddenly got hale and hearty again.

What sort of poison can this have been?

* Professor of Chemistry in Jena.

Jena,
22nd November 1812.

The enquiry I sent you is based on an epigram by Ausonius, who wrote it to preserve the memory of an extraordinary criminal case of his day [(4th century A.D.)]. I enclose the original and a translation . . .

I am quite willing for you to publish our little correspondence about it, if you would like to let the public of chemists, philologists and lawyers have the story. So I am sending you back your note.

415 To BERTHOLD NIEBUHR *

Jena,
23rd November 1812.

When I received your kind letter in Carlsbad I greatly wished that the second part of your work had arrived with it also; for there I have the opportunity to devote a series of days to *one* subject; and what subject could deserve this more than your work? But now in the meantime I have again been eight weeks in Weimar and three in Jena, and I have seldom had the good fortune to concentrate my thoughts on one point for even a few consecutive hours. And at this present moment it is only through an effort, a definite resolve, that I am enabled to converse with you.

My interest in your endeavours remains as ever and is constantly growing. Let us speak however not of these in particular but of what is general. What lies in the past may appear as present to our inward eye and mind by means of written monuments of that age—annals, chronicles, documents, memoirs and whatever they are called. They hand down to us something immediate that in itself delights us, while a hundred different impulses and intentions sometimes make us wish to pass them on again for the sake of others. We do this, we fashion our material, but in what way? As poets, as orators! This has always been the case, and these ways of treatment make a great impression; they take hold of the imagination, of the feelings, they pervade the whole mind, strengthen the character, and lead to action. This is a second world which has swallowed up the first. We must picture to ourselves men's feelings if this world were destroyed and the other did not come fully into view. To anyone wishing to go back to the original way of observation any criticism is most welcome that will destroy everything secondary,

* The historian.

and, where it cannot restore the original, at least ranges its fragments in order and gives some idea of their relations. But the easy-going people, quite rightly, do not want that.

Let me bridge a gap. If we had lived near each other, if I had had the good fortune to know of your researches years ago, I would have advised you to copy noble St. Croix and call your work 'A Criticism of the Writers who have given us Roman History'. But for me your book is the book, and you know titles are a modern invention. So you will understand that in all the main points concerning the world and the people [of Rome] we are of one mind; and accept my thanks too for making Roman History readable to me once more by conscientiously setting its stationary and retrograde eras in the strongest light. For who with any intelligence will deny that Roman history worried him; on the one hand we had this hundredfold Iliad with its endless splendid heroes, including four thousand Fabians, and on the other hand they achieved nothing better in four hundred years than destroying their own city, the state that after endless struggles had just overcome the Philistines of Veii, and destroying it too in the most commonplace way through the battle of the Allia, so that they had to begin again right from the beginning.

But if we look at the matter clearly and distinctly, as you represent it, it is no shame to the Romans but rather an honour.—I must pass on to another point.

You put the whole blame for the retrogression on the aristocracy, you espouse the cause of the *plebs*; this is quite justifiable and is permitted in an impartial scholar at a time when neither the one nor the other exists any longer.

One more general observation, so that I can come to a finish. Every state begins by being aristocratic; it can expand only by means of the masses which are held back and held down until they gain those same rights for themselves. And from that moment there is a demand for a monarchy, and this cannot fail to emerge; and from that point things may roll on, backwards and forwards in many ways. For all three states (states is a foolish word, for nothing is static, everything is in movement), all three conditions suffer from this same movement which makes its own use of what is right and great, as well as what is bad and mean, just so that all this may happen.

In the above manner (to look back for a moment), though it may seem somewhat strange to you, I hope to convince you after all that it is impossible to take a deeper interest in your work, even in

detail, than I do. Your two volumes, and the third and subsequent ones, will always accompany me wherever my changeable years may lead me, and neither you nor I can foresee all that I shall owe to you; for anything sound and energetic is in itself stimulating.

Mountain and valley never come together, but men on their travels may. So may I not hope to meet you somewhere? Let me add the *clausulam salutarem* to this page, as I am so fond of doing to every sheet that leaves my hand, that, even if not judicious and adequate, it yet may seem to you warm and sincere.

With my warm regards.

416 To ZELTER*

Weimar,
3rd December 1812.

Your letter, my very dear friend, telling me of your family's great affliction struck and weighed me down with grief, for when it came I was full of earnest thoughts on life. It is only you who have raised me up again. On Death's dark touchstone you have proved yourself to be true, pure gold. How magnificent is a character so imbued with mind and spirit, and how fair must be the talent built upon it.

I have nothing to say about the actual deed or misdeed. A man is only to be pitied not blamed if the *taedium vitae* takes hold of him. My 'Werther' can leave no doubt in any mind that every symptom of this strange natural-unnatural illness once swept through me also. I know full well what repeated decision and effort I needed at that time to flee the waves of death and what pains it has cost me to escape and recover from many a later shipwreck . . .

. . . One really cannot wonder nowadays at the misdeeds through which man injures himself and others. There is untold pressure from outside and young people especially yield to their appetites and passions. The sad follies of the age distort and disfigure even what is noble and higher in them; so what should guide to bliss leads to perdition—I could write a new 'Werther' that would make people's hair stand on end, even more than the first. And let me add that most young people who feel there is something in them, demand more from themselves than they should. But it is their

* Whose stepson had committed suicide. In this letter Goethe uses for the first time the intimate 'Du' to Zelter. Zelter was the only man to whom he ever gave this sign of friendship after his first years in Weimar.

gigantic surroundings that urge and force them to this. I know half a dozen who are certain to succumb and for whom there is no help, even if one could make their own possibilities clear to them. People often fail to see that reason and courage are given us to keep us not only from evil but also from too much good.

Let us change the subject and talk of your letters and how they help me. Thank you first of all for your remarks on my autobiography. I have already heard kindly things said of it in a general way, but you are the first and only person to go more deeply into the matter. I am glad that my way of presenting my father made the right impression on you. I must confess I am heartily sick of the German 'head of the family', Lorenz Starke or whatever his name may be, indulging his *philistine* nature freely in a kind of dull humour, blundering in the way of his own good impulses and destroying his happiness and that of those around him. My two next books complete the picture of my father; both father and son would have been spared a good deal, if a grain of understanding of what is really a precious relationship had been given to them. But that was not to be and does not appear to be usual in this world. The best plan for a journey may be upset by a silly chance, and we never go further than when we do not know where we are going.

Do, please, continue your observations . . .

417 To FRIEDRICH JACOBI*

Weimar,
6th January 1815.

Here are some general observations in answer to your friendly letter; I thought it a good omen for the beginning of the year.

Men are united by their outlook and divided by their opinions. An outlook is something simple in which we can come together; opinions are something complex, where we scatter. The former is the basis of youth's friendships; the latter are to blame for the breaches of later years. If we realised this sooner we should acquire a liberal attitude towards other—even opposite—ways, while developing our own way of thinking. We should be considerably more tolerant and we might seek to reassemble through our outlook what had been scattered through our opinions.

One single way of thinking cannot be enough for me with the many sides of my personality. As a poet and an artist I am a polytheist, as

* In Munich.

a scientist, however, a pantheist; the one is as firm a conviction as the other. And if as a moral being I require a God, that too has been granted. The things of heaven and earth are so wide a realm that even all created beings together can only begin to grasp it . . .

. . . I sincerely wish you and yours all happiness. My love to you all! I am glad you had such good luck in that game of Rouge et Noir that decided where you were to live. Fate has done as much for me . . .

Your approval of the second part of my biography gives me courage for the third; I mean to devote this summer to it.

Iffland delighted us recently with his consummate acting. We are all well here. Enjoy as good a life as is still granted to us; for what the Greek says is right. 'Age brings so much that ages.' The best of love.

418 To C. G. VOIGT*

Jena,
11th April 1813.

Surely the best way to spend this moment so significant and yet setting our minds so strangely at peace, is for me to thank your Excellency sincerely for your recent news. In peaceful times and heedless youth we trust overmuch to our own powers, undertake great things with insufficient resources, deceive ourselves and others with vain hopes, but it is quite another thing later when in anxious times we are forced to take a clearer view and to bury the hopes we once had and all we only half achieved. I shall always remember what I have owed to your Excellency in this undertaking, nor shall I forget our delightful work and life together, encouraging and helping each other. Though there has been no outward success, the inward gain has been all the greater.

I am exceedingly grateful, too, to learn that you are willing to take on all the trouble of winding up the affair. If only I could do something friendly and useful in return! . . .

419 To KNEBEL†

Weimar,
14th April 1813.

Here's a copy at once for our dear Princess Caroline. Perhaps you will soon manage to send it to her.

* When the silver-mines at Ilmenau had to be closed.

† With Goethe's Freemasons' speech 'To the Memory of Wieland'.

My wife has received some asparagus from Jena without any letter; she ascribes this kindness to you and sends her best thanks.

Wieland's last essay is really delightful, so exactly of a piece with the rest of him. This *animula vagula blandula* made a charming exit. I don't know if you have already heard that his last words were 'To be or not to be, that is the question'? I call this keeping one's scepticism to the end! Farewell and remember me.

420 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

Teplitz,
22nd May 1813.

I had already sealed the enclosed when this ballad [to be called 'The Walking Bell'] came into being. So I am hurrying to send it too, for I hope you will like your invention in this guise. With it I am sending for Prince Bernhard that famous 'Dance of Death' as a ballad. You can always exchange it for the 'Walking Bell'. And here's also a little blue landscape that some good friend can smooth out and mount for you on paper. These bits of fun will serve the important purpose, too, of telling you to be happy and cheerful in whatever your present day-to-day circumstances are. For the disaster that is happening near us is measureless, and we watch it in safety but with trepidation, as one might watch from a rock the wreck of whole fleets. Farewell. Greetings to Riemer; I have counted on his approval of the 'Walking Bell' as well as of the 'Dance of Death'. Some more will follow. My love to you, and enjoy every reasonably good hour. Especially as John * says everybody is lucky who can go to the theatre in Weimar in the evenings, and life would be unbearable here in Teplitz if the sun didn't shine longer than usual; and yet one is bored enough.

421 To RIEMER

Teplitz,
30th June 1813.

When I last wrote, my good friend, I again gave you full authority and power to strike out all foreign words in my manuscript as far as this was possible and advisable, just as we have done in the past. As you know, I am neither obstinate nor careless about this, but I must tell you that since leaving you, I have repeatedly found in the course of conversations that it is really the unintelligent people who insist so eagerly on the language being purified. They are unable

* Goethe's servant-secretary.

to appreciate an expression, so they easily find some substitute they think quite as full of meaning. And then they mean to give an opinion, that always provides them with something to complain about, even in the best writers. People with some half-knowledge do the same about works of art, blaming rightly or wrongly some fault in drawing, some error in perspective, though they have nothing to say on the merit of such a work.

It is really another instance of what often happens; trying to achieve some good by negation or avoidance, one overlooks what one could and should achieve by a positive attitude.

Here are some points for further discussion. A foreign language is mainly to be envied if it can express in one word what the other has to paraphrase. In this respect every language has its advantages and disadvantages when compared with another. We can see this at once by looking through the dictionaries. But I think we might gain a number of words by noting where they originate in the other language, and then tried to arrive at the very same word in our language by a similar etymological derivation.

For example, there is in French the word 'perche', German STANGE, and derived from it the verb 'percher'. This verb is used to say that hens or birds sit on a STANGE or twig. In German there is a verb derived from STANGE, namely STÄNGELN; it is used when speaking of beans, ICH STÄNGELE DIE BOHNEN means I stake the beans; you can also say in German DIE BOHNEN STÄNGELN meaning the beans grow up the STANGEN, so why should one not be allowed to say DIE HÜHNER STÄNGELN, the hens sit on the STANGEN (perches)?*

You will easily find or invent examples of this sort; it seems to me better than making new words by adding prefixes or combining words. But I shall just note shortly where these expressions are mostly found; we have often spoken of this, though in another connection.

We frequently find them in the language of trades and crafts; this is because simple people of a certain cultural level apprehend vividly through the senses and discover many qualities at once in a single object. These can scarcely be included in one word (besides this is not how people of this class proceed), so they take some kind of picture from the whole. The word for this picture is then often used metaphorically and bears fruit, so that with a little skill one can even derive other parts of speech from it and bring them

* The German word *Stange* stands for the English perch and stake.

into the language, especially with the help of humorous writings.

That's all for now. I hope to see you again soon and to have a long talk with you on these and kindred topics.

422 To C. G. VOIGT*

Teplitz,
26th July 1813.

How often have I sat down to send you, my very dear friend, a note of sincere sympathy, and each time I did so, I felt as if paralysed, incapable of finding the least expression for what was in my mind. But now Herr von Wolfskeel assures me that you do not dislike friends expressing their sympathy at your loss; so I can end this long delay and bring myself to fulfil this sad duty.

At the very moment when the crowd was waiting for the two sovereigns† to ride into Dresden by the Schwarze Tor, a vague rumour reached me of what had happened in Weimar on April 18th. The news was confused, and I feared it was your Excellency who was in danger. This increased the anxiety I had felt at seeing a huge wild horde moving into Saxony and Thuringia, for I imagined our rulers and the country robbed of your support and care. Everything looked so black that I hardly could rejoice at my own escape from such evils. My misapprehension lasted for several days, and then explanation brought me new sorrow. For on the heels of the news that your son had been set free, came the news that he had died.

This brings me to the state I spoke of at the beginning. What can one add after mentioning what had happened?

It was a great shock to me, I remember, when I heard of the serious carriage accident to Wieland and his daughter. At first I felt greatly distressed, quite beside myself, and I regained my calm and self-control only when I saw my suffering friend. His cheerfulness and patience made me at once ashamed of my excess of feeling at this clumsy blow of fate. My dear friend, let me come like this to you now. Those who have already seen you, have assured me that you are working constantly and successfully, and that, instead of shunning sympathy and that sad memory, you even find comfort and pleasure in remembering former times of hope.

Let me end here and only add this about myself. Outward calm

* Whose only son had been arrested as a spy by the French; though he was released after a few days, he died as a result of confinement in an unhealthy prison.

† The Russian Emperor and the King of Prussia.

and physical well-being could make me very happy here again, but the threatening political and military sky and the nearness of so many in abject misery banish all ease. I reproach myself for enjoying even the happy hours I manage to spend in the hills round here, at a time when everyone is suffering and trembling. With my kindest regards.

423 To CHRISTIANE VON GOETHE *

Ilmenau,
28th August 1813.

I woke up early without remembering the date. What reminded me was Dienemann bringing to my bedside a wreath with best wishes from Bergrat Voigt (see No. 1). I hadn't yet dressed when I saw his Highness the Duke, the Prince and their suite coming and I ran into the street to meet them. After their friendly greetings, they had hardly got to my room when three little girls came in, carrying bouquets and sheets of gold paper on plates. I discovered his Highness's poem last of all (No. 2). No. 3 was from Count Edling. No. 4 I don't know yet. No. 5 from Fritsch. Almost before I had taken it all in, three other pretty girls came, each holding a pitcher; they recited their poems (Nos. 6, 7 and 8) very prettily, and as the last put the wreath on my head, I gave her a good kiss, and then the others too.

Soon after this the mothers and grandmothers arrived with the grandchildren and the smallest ones and brought a garlanded potato-cake. Hot though it was, Prince Bernhard greatly relished it. And there you see, with me in a long coat and no cravat, we had this little celebration, quite unexpected, but very charming, varied, kind, indeed touching. That's all for now. I'll seal this, so that it can go as soon as possible. You see, you gave me very good advice when you sent me to Ilmenau. This little poem ['Gefunden'] will show you how cheerful I was on the way. I was six hours on horseback yesterday and it suited me very well. It was great fun, my surprise arrival. I wish you a lot of fun too.

424 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
24th November 1813.

The enclosed letter was sealed some days ago; here it is now. The Duke has gone to Frankfort. The volunteers will be called

* On Goethe's birthday.

to the colours in a few days' time. Those who have already applied can wait till he returns and we hear more . . .

I am going on in my usual way, trying to preserve, to order, to build up, in contrast to the way of the world. And I call on others like you, friends of science and art, who remain at home: keep alive, if only aglow, the sacred fire that the next generation will so sorely need!

Tell me more about the 'Euclid Society'. Germans always keep aloof from each other; I've never yet seen them united except in hatred of Napoleon. I wonder what they will do once he is driven back beyond the Rhine! . . .

Young Schopenhauer seemed to me to be a remarkable, interesting young man. You will have fewer points of contact with him, but you must get to know him too. He plays the card-game of modern philosophy with a certain acute pertinacity, doubling and trebling his stakes. We must wait and see if the masters of the guild of philosophers will admit him as a member. I find him intelligent, and otherwise take him as he is.

Everyone in our little circle is well except Riemer, who suffers from a sore throat and a pain in the chest. I don't like to think of him all alone at the 'Marktecke', especially now when everyone is so worried and so busy in his own house. Ziegesar is on the mend, but after a great deal of pain.

I must confess I have not seen the two didactic poems [by Leibnitz and Addison] you ask about. There are endless poems like that, especially in England. I read them last summer in Teplitz, till I felt quite exhausted. One admires the intelligence and soundness, but there's no poetry, only metre, and no depth of observation, only what is easily understood.

And so, good-bye. How I would love to be taking up my old academic life in Jena!

425 To SARA VON GROTTTHUS*

Weimar,
1st December 1813.

Your dear letter brings me, alas, complete certainty about what I have for months been fearing for you, and what various enquiries had partly told me. My dear friend, were you not gifted with this unusual mixture of strength and tenderness, of sense of proportion

* In Dresden, née Meyer, sister of Frau von Eybenberg.

and of feeling, you would not be able to support such great misfortunes. Now you are [rid of the French garrison and] the air of Dresden grows purer again, may the heavens too grow clear above you; may your good husband's health be safely restored with these better days.

These momentous events have passed comparatively gently over us; I and those nearest to me at least kept our health during these anxious weeks, and everybody helped each other to bear even the worst hours.

Wherever we turn, whatever we hear, and in letters from wherever they come, it is tales of woe and distress. The only thing that sustains the younger among us is the hope that a new order of things will arise out of this chaos, that it must arise. We older ones think it likely that we will only look down from better spheres on this new happiness.

Let me know from time to time how you and your dear husband are; I send my warmest greetings to him.

I long to hear of you both, and dear Dresden, being steadily restored to what you were.

Let me add the sincere assurance of my true affection. Keep your friendly feelings for me; that's the sole treasure we can enjoy, now that one unhappy moment threatens to engulf all else.

I have heard Dr Weigel is in Erfurt, but in the town, not in the Citadel. His release was asked for, but the [French] Commandant refused, though agreeing not to take him into the Citadel even in the direst emergency; may he too be spared.

426 To F. W. VON TREBRA*

Weimar,
5th-7th January 1814.

I must thank you, my good friend, most warmly and sincerely before this year makes any great progress for all the kindness you have shown me directly and indirectly during the past one.

And I have every reason to recall past times, for I have just been studying your valuable account of our first meeting in Ilmenau. It was instructive reading and gave me fresh knowledge of myself. Affection and forbearance that prevail together with such fine insight, the belief that noble, indeed great, ends can be reached by unusual means, the assumption that not only good will but also good intentions can lie hidden under the passionate confusion of

* A mineralogist formerly employed in the Ilmenau mines for a short time.

youth—all this I admire, revere and love. So let me repeat my thanks for this and for the beautiful table-top, a testimony of our common researches, excursions and undertakings.

Moreover, during these last few days I have again been studying Charpentier's mineralogical geography and this has made me look forward all the more to what you think of sending me from the western tin mines. It need not be show pieces, I should welcome any stone from the dumps which confirms the passages in Charpentier's book. I should have liked to have inherited the box from Altenberg after the Frenchman's decease.

The magnificent copper-azurite balls suggest many thoughts. We are familiar with the fact that crystals form in some liquids, but it seems incomprehensible to us that a fairly solid stone can serve as medium in which in the same way crystallisation may develop, spread, dislodge the stone, actually replace it. And yet I have discovered a striking medial phenomenon; for in the Champagne the humus in the fields produces pyrites in spherical and similar form. And these pyrites too adhere at no points, they occur as complete, free crystals. During that unlucky campaign I had leisure enough to examine the incidence of these pyrites and I am convinced that they develop where they are thrown up by the plough. I can supply samples if you wish it.

If we go a step further we come to the sandstone of the Chessy district where copper-azurite with more strength and less easily comprehensible activity exercises the same rights as claimed by the iron in that region.

Our chemists here continue to make the most amazing discoveries, and your prophecies gain more and more weight. Talking of prophecies, I must say that things are happening in our day that no prophet would have been allowed to proclaim. Who would have dared to say a year or two ago that a Mohammedan service would be held in the hall of our Protestant grammar school and that the surah of the Koran would have been murmured there? And yet this has happened; we attended a Bashkir service [for some Russian troops], saw their Mullah and welcomed their Prince in the theatre.

As a special favour I was presented with a bow and arrows, and they shall hang as a lasting memorial over my fireplace as soon as God has granted a safe return home to these dear guests.

These have been days of great excitement rather than anxiety. His Highness is going to join his troops which have already advanced as far as Cassel. In these days when we have to look on the state of

war as both natural and desirable, we can throw off every care and whole-heartedly rejoice in success. My son, too, will follow the bugle, though not the drum.* Diana has always been the tutelary goddess of the people of Weimar, in peace as in war.

I wouldn't mention the wretched nervous fever, but that it must serve as an excuse that the third volume [of 'Dichtung und Wahrheit'] is still delayed—and for how long, no-one can tell. That importunate monster isn't even frightened of the printers' presses, and doesn't reflect that these are now freed again and able in many words or few to tell it the truth.

Let me hear from you soon, my dear Trebra. Though a snake coiled in a ring is usually the symbol of eternity, I like to take it as one of a happy life on earth. What better can one want than to see the end joined to the beginning and how can this happen but through the lasting of affection, confidence, love and friendship?

Greetings from my little household. My wife and my fair secretary are anxious to meet you, the latter especially, for she would very much like to see the man to whom I sometimes write such droll things. Let me know soon that you and your family are keeping well.

My sending you these pages corrected in red ink is another sign of the times. Our young gentlemen find it easiest to march away and make things unpleasant for other honest folk as they have been made for us; it is an attractive calling, for one is thought a complete patriot at the same time. We over-sixties have nothing left to do but to make up to the women, to keep them from utter despair. But how is that to be done? With the older ones I play cards, the younger ones I teach something or other. *Vivat sequens!* God keep you your sense of humour! I have no further ambition than to have it said of me: *You are the merriest undone man in Europe.*

427 To J. A. ALBERS†

Weimar,
11th-15th January 1814.

This piece of English ship's rope you have sent me, my dear Sir, is the most remarkable and striking symbol I could have had of these changing times. Here in my lonely inland-cell its tarry smell

* August had joined the Reserve as Aide-de-Camp of the Hereditary Prince.

† A doctor in Bremen.

reminds me most vividly of the wide sea I have not seen for so many years.

Thanks then to you and your dear wife for mentioning this sentimental simile [from my 'Elective Affinities'] to Dr Forbes, and thank him too for sending the rope.*

It should be my first wish now to do something for you in return; but I shall seize this moment to increase my debt by a further request.

Perhaps kind Dr Forbes with his wide connections might be good enough to procure some autographs for me of notable Englishmen, living or dead, even if only their signature or a line or two . . .

Forgive my importunity. These harmless hobbies are like soft cushions we put down on a hard bench. May you find success and happiness in your new situation.

428 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
9th March 1814.

. . . This new spell of winter weather has confined me also to my house and my thoughts. I had been anxious for news of your son and I am glad all is well with him. An expedition like this is not without its fatigues and dangers; but once it is over, it is a life-long gain. Especially for your Carl who means to remain a soldier.

It is always a pleasure to re-read Mme de Staël's book; you really feel you are in good company and its pages invite you to think and to argue. When it is quite finished, it will lead to interesting thoughts about us and our neighbours, especially as it is appearing during such an upheaval, when conditions within and without are radically changing.

Our relations with the English nation are being resumed, and the good Germans don't notice what a danger awaits them there. One can get round French pride, for it is closely related to vanity, but not round English arrogance, for it has a commercial basis in the dignity of their gold. However, we shall see how it all goes, and as we are neither rich nor vain, we shall live contentedly on in our quiet circles . . .

* Just as a red thread is woven into all ropes belonging to the British Royal Navy and cannot be taken out without untwisting the entire rope, 'in the same way a thread of affection goes through Ottilie's diary, holding everything in it together, giving it a special meaning . . .' (Abstract of passage of *Elective Affinities*, Part II, Chapter 2).

Jena,
13th May 1814.

Professor Riemer was with me when your Excellency's gracious letter arrived here last night, and I dictated the enclosed notes to him. To-day, on reading them over again, I find I would say the same thing, but it must be worded differently for official use. But the matter does not allow of any delay; so I am sending this paper, which I regard purely as a confidential expression of my own view. I should like to add one reflection. In the past rulers have often been voted celebrations or monuments; they sometimes declined these, asking that the sum should rather be spent in a charitable cause. It was never more desirable to increase the fund to help orphans than at present, when so many children have been untimely bereft of their parents. Could not the excellent and worthy intentions of the citizens of Weimar be directed to this cause? I for one, would be glad to play my own small part in it.

Your Excellency will excuse my not calling personally before I leave for Berka. We are never aware of our many ties until the moment of leaving comes. I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Berka; it is only a short drive.

ABSTRACT OF ENCLOSED COMMENTS

(1) Obviously everyone will insist on expressing his joy at the Duke's return by lighting lamps, etc. Building a triumphal arch would be costly and perhaps unnecessary, for 'real joy needs no organised form'. People have lately been allowed to use their own judgement about shooting, so they might be allowed to use it now to put up lights.

(2) Against the idea of erecting an obelisk in the Park; the Duke always dislikes the idea of anyone else putting up something in his grounds; besides obelisks are most objectionable unless they are monoliths. 'From the practical point of view, I doubt whether sculptors, carters and masons could accomplish a task like this in four weeks, even with the greatest exertions.'

If I may give my own personal view on this matter, I would say; Let everyone show his joy in his own way over an event of such happiness for all . . . Let me further be so bold as to mention that our Sovereign is returning from Paris where he has seen the greatest art treasures of the world.

* He had written about suggestions made in Weimar for celebrating the Duke's return from his victorious campaign.

Saturday, 24th. Left Frankfort at six; a chilly mist over the river rose gradually and covered the countryside. It was like that as far as Darmstadt, and then the sky grew quite clear and we enjoyed the Bergstrasse in all its splendour. They were knocking down the nuts, and the pears were just waiting to be picked. We drove on from one stage to the next without stopping, till at last we reached Weinheim and then Heidelberg. We were in time to see the sunset from the bridge. I found delightful quarters at the Boisserées, a big room next to their picture-collection. August will remember the Sickingen-House in the large square opposite the castle. The moon soon came up behind the castle and shone on our friendly supper.

Sunday, 25th. Began studying the old Flemish masterpieces, and I must say they are well worth a pilgrimage. I wish all my friends could see them, most of all I wished friend Meyer by my side for my own sake and in general. I can't begin to speak of these pictures, except to say the two Boisserées and their friend Bertram add to their merit in collecting and preserving these treasures by displaying them to advantage and discussing them with understanding. Tell *Hofrat* Meyer certain views are ridiculed here as they are with us. I went to see Paulus, Thibaut and Voss and found them all three well and cheerful. We walked up to the castle in the evening; the valley lay there in all its grandeur and the sunset was magnificent. The glow behind the Vosges lasted on into the night. I went to bed early.

Monday, 26th. Yesterday it was Van Eyck, to-day his pupil Memling. Their forerunners were included too, in order to understand them; and that brings in something new and inexplicable. One can, however, build up the historical theory corresponding to the stages of this art, though that would need space to develop. Voss, Thibaut and Paulus paid me return visits meantime and we spent them very pleasantly together looking at these pictures. We dined together, and a lively young doctor, Professor Neef, joined us. Among other things stories were told of the Jews' attachment to life and their generosity to doctors. After dinner more studying and admiring of the paintings. Frau von Humboldt and her family have arrived here. A walk with Boisserée and a visit to Frau von Humboldt ended the day.

Wednesday, 28th September. More study of Schoreel's pictures, besides those of Jan van Eyck, Hemskerck and Albrecht Dürer. Then we saw the great Eyck 'Adoration of the Kings' with its two side-panels, the 'Annunciation' and the 'Presentation in the Temple'. There are contrivances to show them well. These three vie with a fourth, Lucas [van Leyden's] painting of the Madonna with the Child at her breast. They still seem unbelievable, even when you have seen them repeatedly. I'm now trying to visualise the course of this art as well as I can. There too the influence of politics and Church history is enormous. The owners have studied the matter well and make it in every way easier to understand.

Dined with Paulus at Voss's; very pleasant indeed. Then a walk. Evening at Frau von Humboldt's. Later read in Descamp's book the lives of these masters I have now got to know.

Thursday, 29th September. Byzantine and Flemish-'Grecian' pictures, painted on gold ground after van Eyck. Saw Jan van Eyck's altar from a distance. Quintin Metsys . . .

At a men's gathering at Professor Thibaut's; very merry and cheerful. Our good host was very kind and drank August's health. Back to the Boisserées, saw a few more things. Called on Paulus and on Frau von Humboldt, who is getting ready to leave. Glorious moonlight.

Friday, 30th September. Walked across the bridge and back early; the sun was gaining on the mist. Through the town, out by the Carlstor and up by the Neckar in the shade of the rocks. It was a most wonderful autumn morning. An odd fellow talked to me, Loos was his name, a doctor; said he'd known August [when he was here]. Told me all sorts of things about him. Then Paulus met me and it began to get hot.

Back again, we got out the best pictures, set them up and compared them.

Dined with von Reitzenstein, the minister, in very agreeable company; back again, discussion till near evening. Spent a few hours with Canon Wamboldt.

The weather kept fine, though the cocks had been crowing in the morning.

Saturday, 1st October. Up to the castle on a windy but clear

morning. The garden is most charmingly planned with a fine wide view. The moats, terraces and ramparts are so well and neatly laid out, a charming contrast to the old ruined towers, buildings and ivied walks.

After that I read a bit, studied a number of pictures, among them one of Martin Hemskerck. We talked a lot about Cologne and the Low Countries and all that is still to be found there. Dined here with Herr von Reitzenstein and Thibaut. The pictures we've been studying singly, now hung together in three rooms. They're more magnificent than anything the richest man could buy. Several friends are coming this evening. We go to Mannheim to-morrow; I'm certainly going to visit Luck and go to the theatre. You'll be hearing about that. Adieu now.

432 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
9th November 1814.

The chief among the many benefits of my recent journey is that I feel more tolerant than ever towards the individual. When you see several hundred people at close quarters and thousands at some distance, you must admit that each of them has after all enough to do to make, keep and improve a place for himself. You can't tell anyone how he is to set about it, for in the end it is he who has to improve his lot in bad times and to adapt himself to good ones. This attitude has made me happy throughout the journey, for I asked no-one for more than he was able and willing to give, offered him only what suited him, and cheerfully took and gave what time and place afforded. That means I haven't unsettled anyone in his way of life. The convictions, customs, habits, interests, religion of the people who spoke to me about them, all seemed to suit them admirably, and I have found the same of their taste too.

Everyone looks and wishes for what suits his own beak or muzzle. Some want a narrow-necked flagon, others a flat dish; some want their food raw, others cooked. So I have taken the greatest care to fill my pots and little bowls, my bottles and beakers, and I have even added to my crockery. I have feasted at Homer's banquet and at that of the Nibelungen; but I have found nothing more suited to myself than nature, broad and deep and always alive, and the works of the Greek writers and artists . . .

Nowadays people don't so often keep the good old custom of greeting benefactors and friends at New Year's time; but I can never help reckoning up my last year's debts at this season. Even if I can't settle them, I can at least own to them and ask for a respite. That is the case with you, dear Madam, and I have put off saying anything up till now simply because I had so much to say. Even now it is in some measure painful to me to touch certain chords. I must confess to you that for some years I have feared and avoided Frankfurt because of missing my Mother there, in that city I had never thought of without her in it.

So you see, dear Madam, what heartfelt thanks I owe you. For in your house, in your kindness in caring for me, bearing with me, what you have done did not just give me an image of the things I have lost, but completely made up for them to my feelings. In this way you have led me back and established me in my native city again. Now I look forward to repeated visits there, knowing I can enjoy your society and your sympathetic support without fear of being a burden to my friends.

I am sure you will excuse me from writing anything further after this sincere confession. I am indulging the hope of finding a chance of doing you some service during the coming year, some grateful return, to make up for all your kindness.

Excuse the unknown hand; it is easier to read than mine, and yet it fully expresses the feelings with which I send my warmest regards.

Let me lay at your Highness's feet the copy of my 'Awakening of Epimenides'† I have just received, and may I thank you most respectfully for the first news of its performance.

Though common sense might say a wise man would have either wakened sooner or slept longer, we must simply submit to the destiny that rules things both great and small. But may the prophet-poet once more bring before the Germans the horror they

* Widowed sister-in-law of J. G. Schlosser (Goethe's late brother-in-law).

† Intended to celebrate the victory over Napoleon; the first performance was delayed and meantime Napoleon had returned from Elba.

endured and then threw off, as well as what they have now to win anew.

I hope soon to have the pleasure, long delayed, of entertaining your Highness again.

435 To CARL AUGUST

Weimar,
22nd April 1815.

To His Serene Highness, the Grand Duke, most gracious Sir; the loftiness of your mind and principles has led you, my honoured and beloved Prince, to acquire from your early years excellencies surpassing all others. Birth and good fortune could have added nothing essential to them, but only act as foils to give them greater lustre. We rejoice that for your many-sided untiring work for your country a merited title has been bestowed upon your Royal Highness from without; and we are glad that official language now enables us to use it as a recognised expression, whereas up till now, although it was only the truth, it might have sounded like flattery.

So far your Royal Highness has immeasurably enlarged a small sphere, by encouraging and furthering some appropriate activity in each one of those belonging to you. May you now be granted a long succession of years in which to continue this same beneficial work in a wider sphere of influence.

I trust that in future too your Royal Highness will allow me the joy of witnessing this and indeed giving loyal support within the narrow compass that may be assigned to my activities. Then my later years will resemble those earlier ones I spent near you and used and enjoyed through your favour and influence; so they will not pass without fruit and contentment.

436 To CHRISTIANE VON GOETHE

Wiesbaden,
31st May 1815.

I've more or less settled in here now, in delightful rooms, but expensive; the food's good and cheap, and I've ordered wine from Frankfort, so I'll soon be well off in these important respects. In the morning I drink the delicious Schwalbach water, and then bathe in the healing Wiesbath; it's all very good for me, and I can be busy too. 'Naples' is getting on, so is 'Sicily'; these happy memories

entertain me without tiring me in the least. I've spoken of them so often, it's time they were down on paper. The mining director Cramer and the librarian Hundeshagen are friendly, interested and helpful, just as they were last year. Major Luck of Mainz has called on me already; I haven't heard from anyone else and have all the solitude I wanted. I take two walks every day; the country seems lovelier the more you see and appreciate it.

It's the most beautiful weather, though that's bad for the crops and gardens; they have had no lasting rain for ten weeks. We're already enjoying French beans and green peas too. But the very special treat will always be the salmon; for 30 kreuzer you can get a helping in delicious aspic at the Kursaal. This is just the right season; but I must be careful not to eat too much of it. There are big cherries too, great baskets of them at the street-corners.

A plant I have specially noticed is the double scarlet lychnis, the loveliest thing you could imagine for a garden; I hope they'll send us plants by the autumn. The roses are in full bloom, the nightingales are singing to one's heart's content, so it's not hard to transport oneself to Shiraz. The 'new members*' of the Divan' are neatly ranged and a fresh 'address-list' written for the whole 'assembly', which amounts to over a hundred now, not counting the 'attendants' and 'minor servants'.

So you see the days of my journey and my stay here have been happily and usefully spent. More soon . . .

7th June.

Carl is getting on well. We had thunder and showers to-day.
The best is love.

437 To DÖBEREINER†

Wiesbaden,
11th July 1815.

Your letter of 1st May informs me, my dear Sir, that you are planning experiments in the making of steel by bringing manganic oxide and powdered glass in contact with iron. I have mentioned this in general terms to a friend who has connections with the steelworks in the districts of Berg and Mark. He has no doubt of their interest there in the process to be observed and of their willingness to reward any information about it. So for the moment

* The poems of Goethe's 'West-Eastern Divan'.

† Professor of Chemistry in Jena.

let me request you, my dear Sir, to keep your experiments a secret, to continue them as far as you can, and to tell me in confidence as soon as possible what stage you have reached. In the meantime I shall find out what they think on the lower Rhine about it, and so I can establish a connection useful to both parties by acting a little longer as a link . . .

438 To COUNTESS FRITSCH *

*Wiesbaden,
17th-18th July 1815.*

I thought Frau von Lyncken never looked lovelier than when she brought me the precious box [from her Royal Highness] and the charming words so longed-for of my dear friend. Please convey my most heartfelt thanks to her Highness and do give yourself a friendly look in your mirror, in my name and for my sake.

The story of my wanderings falls into two periods, one of them happy, the other most disagreeable. Good results from baths, fine weather, suitable occupations, for nearly a month without a break; then cold weather, Carl's illness that made me cross and inactive, having lost my servant, account-keeper and secretary in one. But now everything seems to be in a better way. Besides, these trials have not been without advantages, for I have learnt that a man of my build and even with rheumatism in his shoulder, can still, if need be, put on his own tight silk stockings.

I performed this feat again yesterday; but it was worth the effort. A festivity in Bibrach and an evening here at the Kursaal, graced by Archduke Carl's presence, were very pleasant, both in beautiful settings. But it was impossible to voice one's joy at the general good turn in events, for there was no one but was mourning some family loss. The Duke [of Nassau] himself was the most grieved and he spoke most properly.

I have got to know so many people through the festivities and introductions of that sort, and I receive so many invitations, I feel quite nervous about getting away without being thought ill-mannered; and one has to begin thinking of leaving.

What a lot you will have to tell me about Vienna! so that I can take fresh courage to approach our sovereign and noble ladies, if only in my thoughts; and even, if their love for little booklets still

* Lady-in-waiting to the Hereditary Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna, who had accompanied Carl August to the Congress of Vienna.

prevails, to refresh their remembrance of me. I conclude with the request that you may remember me often and earnestly to our sovereign and gracious lady, and I sign myself,

Your devoted.

439 To SCHOPENHAUER *

Weimar,
28th January 1816.

How often in these winter-evenings have I wished you here, my dear Schopenhauer, for it is hopeless to think of getting any further in this matter by letter. I would lay my 'Farbenlehre' between us as a matter for a discussion in which we need not always be of the same mind. But I did not want to leave you quite without an encouraging word after your earnest and successful endeavours. So for two days while I was in Jena I did my best to find out what has been said about the theory of colour here and abroad during the last eight years. I wanted this to be the basis of our future discussions. But this laudable intention had the opposite effect, for I saw all too clearly how people can be quite at one about certain objects and their appearance, and yet never about views on them, deduction and explanation. This is often the case even when people's principles agree, for applying these at once parts them again. I saw then all too clearly that it would be wasted labour for us to try to reconcile our views. Ideas and experience will not come together of themselves; it is only art and action that can do this. I have busied myself with your manuscript and letters; I have even bound the latter in with it with my own hands, so as to keep everything together. I should have liked to have an extract of them made, but as only an expert could have done that, it would have meant making them known without your permission. I should be delighted if you would do it yourself, and indeed I should like to have a short exposition of your views to include in my 'Farbenlehre' some day.

Let me know now and then what you are busy with; you will always find me interested, for though I am rather old for taking up others' ideas, what they have thought and think interests me from a historical point of view. Let me soon hear that you have received this letter. With sincere wishes.

* Who the previous summer had sent Goethe the manuscript of his treatise on *Light and the Colours*.

Weimar,
23rd March 1816.

I received your Excellency's valued letter, expressing once again that good opinion of me which has long afforded me happiness. And now Count Edling surprises me with the news that I am to stand beside your Excellency on the right of the Throne at the Allegiance Ceremony.* I at once expressed my humblest thanks to Count Edling, and now let me hasten to write to you about it, and ask you to preserve your good opinion and friendship for me always, on Festal days, Sundays and week-days.

Weimar,
26th March 1816.

So you have had another severe trial. It is still, alas, the same old story that to live long is to outlive many; and after all we do not even know then what it was all about. The other day I chanced on a first edition of my 'Werther', and this tune that had so long been dead for me, began to play again. One wonders how a man can bear to live another forty years in a world that even when he was young seemed to him so void of meaning.

The answer to part of the riddle is: because we each have something peculiarly our own that we mean to develop by letting it take its course. This strange thing cheats us from day to day, and so we grow old without knowing how or why. When I look at it clearly, I realise it is only the talent in me that helps me through all the predicaments in which I see false steps, chance and the complications of fate involving me.

In the meantime you will have had another letter from me. I will soon be sending you something . . .

Weimar,
26th June 1816.

In my sense of loss at the death of my dear little wife it is the

* The Ceremony of Allegiance to Carl August as Grand Duke took place on 7th April 1816.

† Whose youngest son had died of a nervous fever in France, where he was serving with the Prussian Army of occupation.

greatest comfort to look round and see how much still remains that is good and dear to me.

I have heard nothing from you, my dearest friend, for an eternity, and I long for a kind word and the assurance that you are well. I must, alas, give up my plan of coming to the beautiful Main Valley and of seeing you. The doctors and in some way my own feelings urge me to go to Bohemia, and I cannot yet tell what I shall end by doing. Let me hear from you soon, and send me some important autographs again. Old familiar hobbies like this caress our grief . . .

My best wishes for lasting happiness to you and your family. I have been strangely occupied these days; looking through a mass of old papers. So much begun and abandoned, so many plans, so many intentions not carried out; there is no excuse for it and like a true Oriental one can only hope for God's mercy. Farewell; my very best wishes. Let me soon have good news.

1816-1820

Es ist ein grosses Glück, wenn man bei zunehmenden Jahren, sich über den Wechsel der Zeitgesinnung nicht zu beklagen hat. Die Jugend sehnt sich nach Teilnahme, der Mann fordert Beifall, der Greis erwartet Zustimmung; und wenn jene meist ihr beschiedenen Teil empfangen, so sieht sich dieser gar oft um seinen Lohn verkürzt: denn wenn er sich auch nicht selbst überlebt, so leben andere über ihn hinaus, sie eilen ihm vor, es entwickeln, es verbreiten sich Denk- und Handlungsweisen, die er nicht ahnete.

Mir dagegen ist jenes erwünschte Los gefallen.

*Rückblick 1820,
Zur Geschichte meines botanischen Studiums*

It is very fortunate if a man, as his years increase, has no cause to complain at the change in prevailing ideas. Youth yearns for sympathy, man in his prime demands appreciation, old age looks for assent; and while the former both receive their due, the older man often finds himself cheated of his reward. For although he does not outlive his own self, others live beyond him, hasten past him, ways of thinking and acting develop of which he guessed nothing.

Yet that former desirable lot has fallen to me.

*Retrospect 1820,
History of my Botanical Studies*

GOETHE had now for some time kept increasingly aloof from political matters, but in the autumn of 1816 the Grand Duke invited his opinion on a subject of great importance to the country. Carl August had been the first of the German Princes to implement a decision taken at the Congress of Vienna by giving his country a constitution in place of a government in which his almost absolute power had been limited hardly at all by the ancient rights of the Estates. This new constitution granted complete freedom of the press. Lorenz Oken, Professor of Natural History at Jena, took advantage of this to make attacks in his journal *Isis* not only on the Grand Duke and others, but on the new constitution itself. Carl August bitterly resented this attack, especially as without the freedom of the press granted by the new constitution it could not have been made. Goethe advised him not to proceed against Oken, but to ban the *Isis*. The Grand Duke, though he followed this advice with regard to Oken himself, was unwilling to rescind the newly granted freedom of the press and no action was taken against the *Isis* either. Pressure brought upon him by the Holy Alliance however compelled Carl August a year later to curtail this freedom and to dismiss Oken. This unfortunate affair considerably depressed Goethe's spirits, which had been low since the death of his wife. Towards the end of September Zelter had come to visit him, but this visit, to which Goethe had been looking forward greatly, was sadly shortened by the news of the death of Zelter's elder daughter, and the surprise arrival in Weimar of Frau Kestner—the Lotte of *Werther*—in no way compensated for this disappointment. Frau Kestner, by now sixty three, had been a widow for many years; she had come to Weimar to visit her married sister there and to see Goethe again after an interval of forty two years. Goethe was very polite, but Charlotte Kestner was disappointed; in a letter to one of her sons she said it was not like the reunion with an old friend, it was like a first meeting with an old man.

The political difficulties too were not yet at an end. The little Grand Duchy of Weimar with its liberal Prince had fallen into disfavour with the Holy Alliance which in those years ruled Europe. In 1817 it came to open conflict. On 18th September students from all German universities organised a celebration on the Wartburg, within the Grand Duchy, to commemorate the tercentenary of the Reformation and the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig. The Holy Alliance considered the speeches on freedom delivered on this occasion to be dangerous and requested the Grand Duke to punish the offenders severely. Delegates from the Prussian and Russian governments came to Weimar and Jena to investigate the situation, and though Carl August and Goethe took great

pains to pacify them, both governments forbade their subjects to study at the University of Jena.

Earlier in the year a serious misunderstanding had arisen—perhaps for the first and last time—between Goethe and the Grand Duke. A visiting actor wished to appear with his performing poodle at the Weimar theatre as he had already done in several other towns. Goethe as theatre director refused to permit what seemed to him a desecration of the stage where the works of Shakespeare, Calderon and Schiller had been performed. He persisted in his refusal even against the wish expressed by Carl August, a great dog-lover. The Grand Duke thereupon gave orders for the performance to take place. Goethe deeply wounded resigned from the management of the theatre, took no part in the proceedings in Weimar and stayed on in Jena. But before the month was at an end Carl August went there for a few days and made peace with his old friend. Yet Goethe did not resume the direction of the theatre. On the other hand his interest in the scientific institutes forming part of the University of Jena and in its library were unabated. Science itself occupied him greatly during these years; the essays *Zur Morphologie*, *Zur Naturwissenschaft überhaupt*, *Die Geschichte meines botanischen Studiums* were published and his first studies in meteorology, mainly based on Howards' work, research in mineralogy and geology occupied him at the same time as an essay on the Last Supper by Leonardo. Moreover he was busy with the preparation of a new edition of his collected works in twenty volumes, the rounding off of the *Divan* and the beginning of his work on the *Annalen oder Tag und Jahreshefte von 1749 bis 1822*, mainly a concentrated continuation of his autobiography. Besides all this he organised a pageant in the honour of the Dowager Empress of Russia who came to Weimar to visit her daughter, the wife of the Heir Apparent; Goethe wrote the verses for the pageant.

In this year fell Goethe's seventieth birthday; it was widely celebrated; two years earlier he had the joy of seeing his son married to Ottilie von Pogwitsch, a very lively and charming girl. Their first son, Walther, was born 1818, the second, Wolfgang, 1820 and a few years later a daughter, called Alma.

I have always considered it my first duty to carry out your Royal Highness's gracious commands as promptly and precisely as lay within my powers. But this time I confess I hesitated when your Royal Highness called on me to state what I thought of the periodical 'Isis' . . .

After reading the documents many would have thought it desirable for the police to have prohibited the paper as soon as the advance-announcement of it appeared. They unquestionably have the right to do so on their own authority in cases of this sort . . . But it was not done, and several numbers of the paper were published. This gave us the sad advantage of seeing how audacity, if unchecked, grows daily and reveals itself as boundless.

The enclosed documents contain pages that must fill any responsible person, who in future reads them, with horror. The esteemed president of the *Landes-Direction* has outlined the mischief with clarity and moderation in his memorandum. He has thus made it possible for several important and responsible people to judge the situation and offer suggestions on how this evil might be checked. They have done so and are quite unanimous about the matter. They suggest the editor should be

- (1) rebuked, either personally or in writing, for his insolence and
- (2) threatened that renewed offences against individuals or whole groups will lead to the instant prohibition of his paper. They add
- (3) the suggestion that the Revenue Department should proceed against him and ensure some legal compensation to those already attacked.

I find it extremely embarrassing to give my own view on these suggestions, for though they seem weighty and forceful, I feel obliged to state I consider them calculated rather to increase than to restrain the evil. I make no secret of the possible consequences I anticipate from such action.

To (1) If the editor is cited to appear and fails to do so, how is one to proceed? . . . But if he appears and addresses the authorities with as much audacity and insolence as he does in print—and he is a good enough speaker—is he then to suffer detention or to be set free in triumph?

Suppose he behaves humbly, but makes a note of the whole proceeding and publishes it in the next number, directly or indirectly making a laughing-stock of the authorities? . . . Is one then to proceed with the threatened prohibition? The authorities will then be taking sides and revenging an insult directed against themselves after letting so many attacks against others go unpunished . . .

To (2) Next they mean to threaten him. I expect nothing from that either. Would anybody order a Moor on pain of punishment to wash himself white? The paper ought to be 'more restrained, more modest, more moderate' . . . Have madness, presumption, impudence any limits? They and their kin are by nature boundless and can be neither taught nor restrained . . .

What, then, ought to be done? THE MEASURE NEGLECTED AT THE START MUST BE TAKEN AND THE PAPER INSTANTLY PROHIBITED. There is no cause to fear the consequences of a bold step; for whatever the outcome, one at least has the pleasant feeling of having acted rightly . . .

. . . I cannot think an action for damages brought against the editor would be advisable. It would mean perpetuating and actually enlarging on an affair best finished with and forgotten . . .

What is done is done, and even the outcome of an action in court would only show that there had been too much leniency already.

So I come back to my one measure I have outlined above and repeat it as follows: Let us ignore the editor altogether, and have resort to the printer and forbid him on his personal responsibility to print the paper . . .

One more point, a very important one, ought to be mentioned. In the documents and papers that have reached me it is taken for granted that this state of affairs will lead to acts of personal revenge [by those the editor has attacked]. I have been amazed to see that no one seemed to feel how terrible such a statement is. I want to speak for the editor now, after having spoken against him. Just as I wanted to spare him a kind of schoolboy's humiliation [through the proposed official rebuke], I now want to save him from the danger of some infamous treatment [expected if the publication is continued] . . . Who will come to his help if exasperated young men grievously maltreat him—a man who still deserves to play a brilliant part in science?

I have just received a comprehensive and thoughtful essay on future censorship regulations, and this confirms me still more in the opinion I have here expressed at length. For it makes it clear that 'press-anarchy' brings about 'press-despotism'. I might almost say that a wise and powerful dictatorship must stand up against this kind of disorder to keep it in check until legal censorship is restored. How this is to be done calls for further thought . . .

444 To Frau CHARLOTTE KESTNER *

Weimar,
9th October 1816.

Should you, my dear friend, wish to make use of my box at the theatre to-night, my carriage will call for you. No ticket is required. My servant will escort you through the parterre. Pray forgive me if I am not there myself, and also that I have not as yet been visible, though in my thoughts I have often been with you. My sincerest good wishes.

445 To ZELTER

Weimar,
7th November 1816.

I agree with you entirely; a lively exchange of letters will do much to cheer the long winter evenings, so I'm writing at once in answer to your letter of 25th October. My 'Italian Journey' will have reached you by now.

We are old before we grasp what has happened to us in youth. We never really learn or understand anything! What affects us does so only by what it may suggest, and we should thank God if anything then stirs and sounds in ourselves. I have been reading Linnaeus again, and that extraordinary man amazes me. I have learned a great deal from him, everything but botany. I don't think anyone belonging to the past, except Shakespeare and Spinoza, has influenced me so much.

It is strange but quite natural for people to speculate on our last years of life as on the Sibylline Books, having coldly and cruelly watched the earlier ones go up in flames. You probably heard of my urging and tempting invitations from the Rhineland, for it was taken there as a settled thing that I would accept. But what have I to do with all this? I won't deny that I achieved something in the

* Née Buff.

few summers by the Rhine and Main, for I only preached St. John's message, 'Little children, love one another', and if you can't, at least tolerate one another. And you will agree I am right that if this heavenly message should be accepted in your Nineveh [of Berlin], you would be quite different people, though neither more or less than you are now.

But what's the use of spending days and hours exerting influence through one's presence? Better for me to stay unmolested in my quiet home, dictating, copying, printing, putting aside, so that things can be sent out or remain here. In this way no one need admit where he got anything from—as you quite rightly say—and yet all mankind may be a little spruced up by it.

All these foolish quarrels about 'earlier and later discoveries', plagiarism and quasi-purloinings are so obvious to me and seem so trivial. For a hundred minds may seize at the same time on what is in the air and what the age calls for, without anyone borrowing from another. But—let's stop here. Disputes about priority are like those about legitimacy; the man who can maintain his position has the earlier and juster claim.

It is only [Friedrich August] Wolf's bad conscience that makes him keep repeating his absurd behaviour towards me; he won't be likely to tell anyone what a rough answer he got. Fortunately or unfortunately I had taken a good deal more Burgundy than was wise, and I let myself go too. Meyer sat there, controlled as usual, and feeling rather embarrassed.

This was [at Tenstedt] on the night of the 27th August. I had made plans for a pleasant birthday on the 28th with Wolf who had arrived unexpectedly. But it happened that Meyer had to leave in the morning, and I regretfully let that excellent and maddening soul, Wolf, go too, and spent the 28th happily by myself. Besotted with contradiction, he would have finished off my birthday by asserting I had never been born.

But all this will get the better of him some day and he will end by not knowing which way to turn. Herder, too, ventured to carry on youthful bad manners like these into his maturer years, and this made a desperately unhappy man of him in the end. Ask yourself if habits like these still cling to you; I do so daily. One ought not to deviate in principle even a hair's breadth from the highest maxims of art and life. But in practice I would rather put up with something mediocre in the people I meet than misjudge or even find fault with what is good . . .

Weimar,
15th February 1817.

As an answer to your kind letter, so full of news and information, let me tell you at once something pleasant that has happened to me. We are not always so lucky of course. You must have seen Herr von Derschau's majolicas in Nürnberg, here is a list to remind you. This fine and important collection has come into my possession through good [Professor] Seebeck. It has just arrived safely without the least damage . . . I have had it arranged and hope to show you it soon; the bowl you so kindly gave me has its place of honour with it. The last items, 21-23, are really priceless. So that's a good beginning to the spring.

I have been expecting a very strange document these last few days—Herr Städel's will. He has left his house and art-collection and the sum of

Thirteen Hundred Thousand florins

for an art-institute for which no directions at all are laid down as yet. As you can imagine the people of Frankfort can't agree how to dispose of such a huge sum. Two parties have emerged, and both do me the honour of trying to draw me in . . . They give me time to decide while they dispute, and meantime my decision ripens to have nothing whatsoever to do with it.

I have also had the oddest proposals from Berlin [about its art-collections]. I am flattered by their confidence, but I don't want to enter into such vast obligations at my age; it would only be possible to do so in the prime of life and with twenty years before one . . .

You see, my dear Knebel, that I would have to be absolutely determined on being idle, to feel a moment's boredom. For whatever one does, happenings like these, even if one takes care not to do anything about them, pull one to and fro. Write soon! If I can't come, I shall soon have something to send. Greetings to your family.

Jena,
24th March 1817.

Schiller built a small garden-house in the left-hand corner of his garden. An outside stair led to the one room which makes up the first floor. This stair has rotted and so has the lower part of the woodwork at present placed too low. This should be renewed at a higher level, and the stair placed inside the building; then one could

again reach the upper room and take visitors to it. People often come here, and my idea is not to leave the room empty after restoration, but to put a bust of my excellent friend in it. On the walls, framed behind glass, we could have a characteristic specimen of his own handwiting and a well-written copy of my 'Epilogue' to his 'Song of the Bell'. And I should like to have a chair, a small table which he used and perhaps an ink-well, pen or some other relics. Everything should be fittingly and well set out, as far as space permits, to gratify the wishes of the residents of Jena and of others, and to fulfil this duty of friendship.

448 To CARL AUGUST

Jena,
15th April 1817.

Once again your Royal Highness is graciously meeting or rather anticipating my wishes. I felt I could entertain them now that your Royal Highness's approval of my suggestions ['Rules for Actors'] enabled me to instruct my subordinates according to them; any modifications can be made gradually in the light of experience.

Pray accept, then, my dutiful thanks for all the kindness and indulgence I have enjoyed while in charge [of the theatre], and allow me to exert in future some influence on that part of its management in which I can claim knowledge and experience.

And at the same time may I beg your Royal Highness graciously to grant my son's release also from this work. The main point of his occupation was to deal with the daily even hourly pressing details and to settle them with me, whereas my present connection will only refer to situations requiring experience and calm judgement.

The special kindness you have again shown my son [by giving him the title of 'Kammerrat'], for which I am most deeply grateful to your Royal Highness, gives me double cause for this request . . .

I have nothing but the best news about the direction of the scientific institutes, a pleasant duty in which your Royal Highness has confirmed me . . .

As I flatter myself that my presence is helpful in settling [Professor] Renner [at the Veterinary College] and [Court-Mechanician] Körner [at the Observatory] here, may I request an extension of leave [from Weimar]? May this important foundation give pleasure as well as do honour to your Royal Highness, and I thereby acquire

some merit in working for it. With repeated and manifold thanks I remain Your Royal Highness's most obedient servant.

I must not omit to say a word of praise for the magnificent English works that have reached me. With your gracious permission I shall send Herr Vogel some further items I have noted as desirable.

449 To C. G. VOIGT

Jena,
29th April 1817.

May I ask for your Excellency's kindly interest in this case I feel urged to put to you.

It was to be expected that the Veterinary College, though of great and far-reaching importance, would be subjected to some trials because of its affinity with the most degraded occupation—and this has proved to be so.

Soon after I arrived here, one could hear the pros and cons generally discussed, first by the lower, then also by the middle classes. I waited for some event that could be seized and acted upon. And now the rabble, particularly the women, are beginning to agitate against those in minor positions at the College; the cleaner's daughter, the blacksmith's son are pursued with coarse invective, and even the demonstrator himself is exposed to indirect insult. (It must be admitted that it is he who rides about the country to get the detested carcasses). I have been watching it all in silence because this occupation has always suffered—not quite unjustly—under the prejudice which used to be fostered in the interest of the townsfolk. But now we have special reason to value whatever is useful, now that evil and danger are closing in on every side. So we ought to protect institutions like this just because of their disreputable associations.

These slanders affect even our finances; we have to pay our cleaner a larger sum than her due, simply to keep her; it would be very hard to find another to undertake services so odious and furthermore exposed to obloquy.

The complaints I have received are grave enough, but they mostly concern women and children, and so one cannot make investigations or inflict severe punishment. I suggest, therefore, that the police be told to put a warning in the weekly paper. I enclose a draft to save you trouble, and would request your Excellency's kindly interest in hastening matters.

450 To C. G. VOIGT

Jena,
16th May 1817.

Your Excellency will probably smile or perhaps even blame me for spending 52 saxon thaler on a 'magic manuscript' for our Library. I enclose a copy of the title. I haggled over the price for a whole month, but in the end I couldn't let the thing go. An old family of alchemists, from near Neustadt, has been hoarding it in secret as a great treasure for some years, and they have only brought it to light as faith dwindled and poverty grew.

I mean to keep it here, and before Kosegarten comes I will have covers and a case made for it; up till now it has always been kept wrapped up in a rug. I don't think it is as old as it claims, but it is strange enough to be a marvel for the Library-visitors and a good addition to our Collection of Curiosities.

Forgive and be interested!

ENCLOSURE

'Bibliae Magicae, that is the entire authentic transcript of the Old Testament, by Hans Weymar, of the 6th and 7th Books of Moses. Summary of the magical biblical books with correct classifications and conjurations, usefully arranged in 1505 A.D. on 22 cardboard charts and 2 transparent sheets, written in large coloured letters in Hebrew, Syriac and German.'

451 To OTTILIE VON GOETHE*

Jena,
23rd June 1817.

A salmon has just arrived, a benefit for both science and the kitchen. It was caught at six, at eight it was in the dissector's hands, and now at nine there's a good bit coming to you, which I hope you will enjoy with some friends.

Very careful dissection led to a fine understanding of this wonderful creature. And so farewell.

452 To FRIEDRICH JACOBI†

Weimar,
3rd July 1817.

I often find myself tempted to tell you, my very dear old friend, about how I am and what I am doing. But then I stop, for we never

* Née von Pogwitch, married to August von Goethe on 17th June.

† In Munich.

know whether what interests us will also occupy, entertain and stimulate friends. So we leave it to chance how something reaches them one way or the other, without expecting or demanding any special interest.

We are sending [a young artist, Louise Seidler], a pretty, charming and good child to Munich as the best place for her to develop her artistic talent. Be kind to her for my sake until your own inclination and conviction may make you kind and useful to her. She can give you a personal picture of our circle, activities and occupations, perhaps more faithfully and vividly than we could ourselves.

I have been three months now in Jena, busy, as I have always liked to be, with natural philosophy alone. I am not yet certain where I shall go before summer is over. I fear it is unlikely my travels will bring me near you this time either.

Farewell; remember me in your family circle, in memory of happy times.

453 To HEGEL*

Jena,
8th July 1817.

I owe you the sincerest thanks, my dear Sir, for the welcome and decided way you have declared yourself in favour of my theory of colours, really an old, old one to which I have only given new expression. Double and threefold thanks, then, especially as my decision to be heard in print again on this subject makes me look round for friends and well-wishers. So here is part of what will be appearing very shortly. The rest will soon follow, in the hope of your approval.

I am looking forward to pleasure and instruction from your book which, no doubt, will be reaching me soon. With kind regards.

454 To HUFELAND†

Weimar,
5th September 1817.

What you so kindly sent me, my dear Sir, reaches me just at the moment when a number of happenings give me occasion to

* When Goethe had received proof-sheets of Hegel's *Enzyelopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundriss*.

† Professor of Medicine in Jena, writing about a book on Animal Magnetism, i.e. Mesmerism.

reflect on the important subject with which you deal. So I must thank you most warmly for the brief exposition of what one can and must recognise as long-standing experience, and accept as fact . . .

When it comes to applying this power that dwells in man, that affects him and can be awakened in him, I agree that every individual who seeks to distinguish himself through it ought in some way to be authorised by law. If mesmerism is to be used to effect a cure, then only qualified, appointed doctors ought to have the right to employ it.

But in the matter of control, it seems wrong to me that the decision about *individual cures* should be left in the hands of a supreme medical authority. Should this body disapprove of mesmerism, they could hinder it unduly, and should they favour it, they could as unduly further it. *Meo voto* the qualified doctor would have to make it known that he intends to use mesmerism to effect cures. He would then be given permission, subject to his keeping the most exact journal which he would, however, have to produce only in the case of any complaint against him. In this he would be in the same position as any man of business whose books are never examined except in cases of dispute. I am drawn to make this suggestion especially because of my conviction that every cure by mesmerism will contain some mysterious element even for the man who works it, so that he is unable to render a complete account of it stage by stage, either to himself or to others. If he felt obliged to submit this regularly to his superior authority, he would run the risk of altering and distorting the facts. And I cannot approve of the matter being transferred from the wholesome esoteric sphere to the over-large exoteric one; every science suffers from this in our communicative century. Please let me have your kind and considered opinion on these remarks.

455 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
13th October 1817.

. . . The most wonderful phenomenon of these last few days for me has been Byron's tragedy 'Manfred', which a young American visitor has given me. This strange, gifted poet has absorbed my 'Faust', and has taken from it the strangest food for his melancholy. He has used every theme in his own way, so that none remains

what it was; and for this very reason I cannot admire him highly enough. His transformation of my poem is so much of a piece, one could give extremely interesting lectures on its likeness and unlikeness to the original. I don't deny, however, that the gloomy fire of his pervading and endless despair grows irritating in the end. And yet one's annoyance is never without admiration and respect. As soon as our Byron-worshipping ladies have devoured the book, you shall have it.

456 To CARL AUGUST*

Jena,
14th December 1817.

I trust your Royal Highness will believe me and graciously accept my assurance that I have suffered much for you and with you this last while. I am so moved by what has occurred as to avoid company of any sort for fear of speaking to anyone as roundly as I once did to Einsiedel. But my best comfort comes, my dear Prince, from your good humour. Based as it is on evenness of temper and strength of character, it surrounds you with a kind of cheerfulness and shows most triumphantly when things are at their worst. Besides, as I often tell myself, rightly or wrongly, some kind of explosion was bound to occur; we may think ourselves lucky it broke out so quickly and clumsily. I shall soon be sending your Royal Highness some writings I have been working at as talismans against the evil spirits. And a copy of the instructions for the meteorologist on the Ettersberg, with illustrations, is being made and will reach you by Christmas.

Most of my 'Remarks', too, on Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' are already written out in full. If you would give orders for the tracings to be carefully packed and sent here, the whole things could be assembled by New Year. I have written a friendly letter to [Marchese] Cataneo [in Milan], mentioning my forthcoming essay and asking for some notes for it. As I am basing it on Bossi's work and have tried to come near using the Italian way of thinking and talking, I hope the little essay will soon be translated into that language . . .

I have only good news as usual about things here. There is the best of will in the world everywhere, for no-one's interests are harmed, indeed things are to some people's advantage.

* With reference to Carl August's conflict with the Holy Alliance.

I shall venture to close here, once more promising the 'Cloud Messenger' by Christmas . . .

457 To A. SCHÖPKE

Jena,
16th February 1818.

I feel I must let you know about the settings of my poems you have so kindly sent me; they have been well received both here and in Berlin where I sent them to friends and music-lovers. So I can encourage you to keep faithfully along the way you have chosen, the way nature has pointed out for you.

It may be that there are no real answers to the questions you put before me, though in conversation I might make suggestions of some practical advantage to the musician.

For instance, I should like to answer your question 'What may the musician depict?' with a paradox: Nothing or Anything. He may depict nothing just as his senses receive it, but anything this receiving of impressions through the senses makes him feel. There is no art in imitating thunder in a piece of music, but I should value highly any musician who can make me *feel* as if I were hearing thunder. Indeed, utter peace, silence, even negation have been quite definitely expressed in music; I can think of perfect examples of this. Let me repeat; music's greatest and noblest privilege is to tune the mind's moods without requiring ordinary outside means.

I send my respects to your distinguished circle and hope for a friendly reception if I come to Teplitz this year.

458 To FRIEDRICH SCHLOSSER *

Jena,
8th June 1818.

My good friend, forgive my bothering you to-day about just a trifle; but it's too nice for me to help writing.

They are selling an optical instrument in Frankfort, a kind of short telescope, and when you look through it you see regular patterns in colour, and these change perfectly regularly at the slightest movement. It's an invention from London; I can't tell you the name properly, but in one letter I made out 'Kalleidoscope'. I should like two of them. . . .

* In Frankfort.

We are all well here, my family and I, and send warmest greetings to you and your dear ones.

459 To J. G. COGSWELL *

Jena,
27th June 1818.

Dear Sir, the letter you have done me the honour to send me could not have arrived more opportunely. I have been devoting some weeks of leisure to widening and developing the general idea I had formed of the past and present condition of the United States of America and have surrounded myself with all the older works and the more recent books of travel.

Thinking about this immense country consisting of so many diverse regions naturally led me to wish to know the geological composition which determines how the surface of the land is shaped. It so often fixes the divisions between the different provinces, and enables us to judge up to a certain point what their products will be. Especially when we can add the main climatic conditions . . .

It is my wish to offer to the Library of Boston such of my writings as may have some interest for the inhabitants of this distant city, and also the works of some others. May I therefore beg you to let me know at your convenience where I should send this consignment. I hope it may be possible for me to improve my knowledge of this amazing country which attracts the eyes of the whole world by its ordered peaceful conditions, favouring a development whose bounds we cannot foresee. I trust you will continue to remember me and that as long as we are both on this earth, you will give me occasional news of yourself and your fellow-countrymen.

460 To ZELTER

Weimar,
4th January 1819.

I kept being interrupted yesterday evening when I was just going to dictate a letter to you, to keep our correspondence from dying out completely. And then your friendly letter arrived and the culinary gift. Many thanks for them and let me say at once that the particularly choice carrots have come just at the right moment; they and the fish will make a special meal for my guests and myself.

I have done practically nothing of what I had set myself to do since you left [last November]. I couldn't refuse to lend my help

* In Baltimore (from the French).

for some occasions while the Empress of Russia was here, and so organised the pageant; I enclose a programme, the explanatory poems are to follow.

Nearly 150 people took part in it. It was no small task, and it took me over five weeks to dress them in character, to group them, to arrange their order of appearance and to get them to speak their parts. But we then enjoyed absolutely universal praise; this was rather dearly bought though, considering the great expenditure of imagination, time and money, as those taking part did not mind what it cost them to dress up. And of course in the end it all vanished in smoke, minute by minute, like fireworks.

I myself have least cause to complain, for the poems, to which I gave great care, remain, and a precious gift from the Empress, enhanced by her gracious and friendly reception of me, rewarded me beyond all expectation.

Once we had seen this great stream of court-society and life flowing North in your direction, I turned at once to the East and back to my former acquaintances [of the 'Divan']. I am keen to finish it with the additional poems, and I want it to reach you by Easter. However, we shall have to be fairly busy and active for three or four months more, with all the interruptions that come . . .

The mere sight of your composition is enough to cheer me again, and now I want to hear it and set about altering the passages in my poem* that don't lend themselves to singing. Apropos of this I must tell you how I wrote the poems for the pageant. I stayed a whole three weeks at Berka, where [Spa-] Inspector Schütz played to me for three or four hours a day. I asked him to keep to chronological order, from Johann Sebastian Bach to Beethoven, including Philipp Emanuel, Handel, Mozart and Hadyn, as well as Dussek, etc. At the same time I studied Marperger's 'Complete Musical Director', and I had to smile as I did so; what a serious and thorough age it was and how a man like that felt the bonds of Philistinism that held him.

I have bought the 'Well-Tempered Clavichord' and Bach's chorales, and given them to Schütz for Christmas. He will use them to delight me when he comes here, and charm me when I go to him.

I should be glad to plunge into the study of the chorale with you to guide me; it is an abyss where one cannot find one's way alone . . .

* *Ballade vom vertriebenen und zurückkehrenden Grafen.*

You see I am snuffling around again on the borders of your territory, but it will come to nothing, with the people here all like dumb fish. But this isn't the only case where we have to learn to do without hope. And so on for ever.

461 To B. R. HAYDON*

Weimar,
11th March 1819.

Sir, in answer to your polite letter, which you did me the honour of addressing to me last November, permit me to remark that if such young men as Messrs Bewick and Lansdown have great reason to rejoice at having found in you so able and distinguished a master, you must on the other hand, feel an equal degree of satisfaction to have had it in your power to bring your pupils acquainted with such excellent models, as those which your country of late has had the good fortune to acquire.

Those of us at Weimar who love and admire the arts share your enthusiasm for the remains of the most glorious period and hold ourselves indebted to you for having enabled us to participate, to such a degree, in the enjoyment and contemplation of those works, by means of such happy copies.

We look forward with pleasure (though we may not live to witness it) to the incalculable effect and influence, which will be produced upon the arts by those precious relics, in England as well as in other countries.

I have the honour to be with great regard, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant.

462 To FRITZ VON STEIN

Weimar,
11th (14th) March 1819.

This time, my dear Fritz, our good friend Raabe† deserves praise more than any fine singing-bird; for he has reminded you of me again and made you write and send [the caviar]. First of all, then, I must send my dear daughter-in-law's best thanks for the delicious and ample present for the kitchen. Double thanks indeed, for now she has something good to set before her friends as well as her

* Who at Goethe's request had sent drawings of parts of the Elgin marbles. (Translated for Goethe into English by Noehden.)

† *Raabe* is German for raven.

household, and she is delighted also to enjoy something we have been without almost the whole winter through. I have heard from time to time of the sorrow and joy the years have brought you, and have joined with you in both. And now I thank you most warmly for thinking of giving me news of what you are doing.

The love of establishing small societies, which you have noticed in Breslau, is common to the whole of Germany at present. It shows that there are needs that the authorities cannot satisfy, varied activities they cannot direct or use. The ladies' associations were formed [during the war], at a time of need, because there was no one else to give help. That need is over now, and the associations are spreading over the whole country and even into the smaller towns and villages as institutes for education and instruction. The students' societies and those for athletics are generalising their influence in the same way, and also a number of particular societies, for instance our 'Friends in Need', founded by Falk. All of these are states within the state, separate circles that touch, that intersect—valuable on account of their universal good-will, dangerous because of particular aims, indispensable because everybody wishes to help and safeguard himself. And now by a strange contrast the guilds are being dissolved, because every individual would like to share in the advantages that only a corporate body can achieve. The joint ownership of land is being abandoned because separate ownership is able to make better use of the land. And so people take and give up possession as it suits them from conviction or whim, always putting this down, however, to the irresistible spirit of the age. And they may be right too. Forgive these generalities and take from them what seems best to you.

Best greetings, please, to Herr Raabe, and think of me always in love and friendship.

463 To C. G. VOIGT

Weimar,
21st March 1819.

Forgive me, my very best friend, for waiting a whole day before answering your precious note. It is inexpressibly noble of you to take leave of your lifelong friend in these solemn moments. But I cannot let you go! When those dearest to us make ready for a journey that is soon to bring them back again, we struggle against it. Should we not resist in the most serious cases?

Let me, then, still enjoy the hope to be with you again soon, so that I may congratulate us all on seeing you restored to strength and activity.

Now and ever your most faithful friend,

J. W. GOETHE

464 To CARL AUGUST

*Weimar,
6th May 1819.*

Your Royal Highness, I must admit that [Byron's 'Vampire'], that fairy-tale you sent me, is surely the most extraordinary product of the most extraordinary man.

I have used underlining in red to try to convey my amazement at the huge demands of good Pick [for the picture and the glass-window].

I hope to obtain the Frankfort carving.

The skeletons have not yet arrived from Vienna.

They are still soaking the camel.

My grateful thanks for the collection of potatoes [for the Botanical Institute].

Written in the greatest haste while sitting to [Dawe], the English painter.

465 To MARIANNE WILLEMER

*Weimar,
26th July 1819.*

No, most charming Marianne, I feel you mustn't stay in Baden without hearing from me, now that you have opened your dear lips and broken a very unwelcome silence. Shall I repeat that you seemed inseparable from my true old friend Willemer's presence; it revived all the feelings in me which his noble mind was always so glad for us to entertain. Though you were silent, I had put a number of things ready for him to take you on his way back from Berlin; but he did not pass through Weimar, and so they are still here.

And now you say, and so charmingly, that you think—and like to think—of me. So let me tell you over and over again that I never fail to respond to every one of your feelings with my whole heart. I hope this letter will find you happy and prompt you to a long commentary on the same brief text.

If I were Hudhud,* I would run to meet you instead of across

* The hoopoe, Hafiz's love-messenger in the 'Divan'.

your path. You would have to welcome me not just as a messenger, but for myself. Let me end, my dear, with the pious wish 'O, that we were there'.

466 To HARVARD UNIVERSITY*

Weimar,
11th August 1819.

Thro' the agency of Mr J. G. Cogswell.

Goethe's Works, vol. I-XX

Doctrine of the Colours, vol. I-II, plates, 4to

The Propylaeae, vol. I-III

Life of J. G. Hackert

Travels in Italy, vol. I-II

Art and Antiquity, vol. I-II

On Natural Science

Bohemian Mountains (3 copies)

Iphigenie, translated into Modern Greek (3 copies)

Occasional Poems

The above poetical and scientific works are presented to the Library of the University of Cambridge in N. England as a mark of deep interest in its high literary character, and in the successful zeal it has displayed thro' so long a course of years for the promotion of solid and elegant education.

With the high respects of the Author,

J. W. v. GOETHE.

467 To JOHANN JACOB WILLEMER

Carlsbad,
8th September 1819.

In answer to all your kindness let me tell you something of what I have been doing lately.

[I left Jena at the end of August and] spent the 28th in the open, in fine weather, on the way from Asch to Carlsbad, which I reached in good time. A few days later the assembled statesmen left, some acquaintances followed them and I stayed on quite alone.

At once Hudhud greeted me kindly, confided many a thing to me and asked for these messages to be put into verse to show he had done his errand duly. And, of course, I couldn't refuse.

* English translation in Harv. Coll. Papers IX.14.

Soon after this came the friendly account of the wonderful celebration of my 70th birthday in Frankfort, so magnificent that I felt both delighted and embarrassed. My son writes to me from Weimar of presents and gifts that fill me with gratitude. And to-day a diploma of the Society for German Historical Research arrived for my birthday too, bearing the signatures of the same people you have named, my dear friend, as taking a principal part in these celebrations.

I feel dazzled by even the distant brightness of these festivities arranged in my honour. Here I am among sheer rock-faces where I can hardly hammer out any fresh knowledge. So I prefer to turn my thoughts to my worthy friends in that lovely open country along the Rhine always alive with boats. I hope they are enjoying there the same beautiful autumn days as I am, days doubly welcome here among these mountain gorges.

A few lines from you in the course of the month would make me very happy indeed.

Do please suggest something I could do to show my gratitude to the kind organisers of the Frankfort festivities.

468 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

*Carlsbad,
15th September 1819.*

Extraordinary newspaper announcement:

'On 15th August my beloved husband, Gerhard Christian Schoening, after only four weeks of the merriest marriage, died as a result of consumption, bedridden for nearly seven weeks, in the 30th year of his life. Unforgotten, etc.

Oldenburg, 15th August 1819.'

This extract, the fruit of my assiduous reading of the newspapers, is for your serious consideration.

*Carlsbad, 15th September,
on the brightest of sunny days, 1819.*

469 To T. J. SEEBECK

*Weimar,
30th December 1819.*

. . . Occasionally something pleasant happens. I have been stimulated for a week by the visit of the English painter Mr Dawe. He has been painting my portrait, and this gave me the opportunity for

very pleasant conversations. He knows about the studies of his fellow-countrymen Sowerby, Dr Read, and others on the theory of colours, and he had heard in a general way of our endeavours. I tried to win him over by showing him the practical side of the question, and in a short time he was as conversant with the theory of the opaque, of the formation of colours, as if he had invented it. It's the advantage you find with English people; they know at once how to separate what is useful from what is not . . .

'Prometheus' looks strange indeed. I hardly venture to publish it; the opinions in it are so *sansculotte*-modern. How strange that this has been tossing to and fro for so many years in men's minds!

Since my children's friendly reception in Berlin I have heard practically nothing from there. Let me have some news from time to time of yourself, your family and those who share our views.

470 To C. F. A. SCHREIBERS*

Carlsbad,
23rd May 1820.

My dear Sir, your most welcome letter reaches me, as you so kindly meant that it should, just at the moment when I am preparing to leave Carlsbad. All your affectionate, kindly wishes have been fulfilled; for I can hardly remember any year when taking these waters did me so much good.

The small consignment I had announced I was sending you, was just packed up, the catalogue written out, with a few remarks, so let me recommend it all now to your indulgence. With your range of outlook you will benevolently pardon the pedantry of the monograph, and since we men must always hold some opinion, in this case too you will not show yourself unfriendly towards the occasional opinions expressed.

The geology of the country round here has taken up my attention for some years now. The doctors say that one should not read or write or even think; but perhaps a calm contemplation of nature might still be entertaining and refreshing. Here in Carlsbad our attention is drawn above all to rocks and stones, the most ancient, the newer and the most recent, some in the depths of the primeval world; others are being formed every day, all leading us from effect to cause, from cause to something higher. This has been in my mind during my visits to Carlsbad for almost forty years now, and I have

* In charge of the Imperial museums in Vienna.

always noticed something new and found something to marvel at.

Let me refer now to the Joseph Müller [mineralogical] collection of which I have written. I enclose a copy of my essay. A thought occurs to me now that should have been my main question before—is there a collection like this in one of your museums? If not, I could send one, including the most recent findings, either on my next visit here or even from Weimar, because for years I have been sending important specimens there, and what I am now despatching would fit into this very well. Since Joseph Müller's death there is no one here who could make a collection, though many people interest themselves in details.

The geological composition of this ancient mountain range with its extraordinary variations, its primary rock, its coal-layers that were formed there later and in their turn caused subterranean fires—all this brings a great many thoughts to my mind. And the patient forgets himself and his troubles and for sheer thinking never gets the length of thinking.

In conclusion I cannot but express in a few words how greatly I am touched by the circumstance that my contribution is to be preserved near that which your Excellency's care has already brought there from the Teplitz district.* This collection which I still remember very well, speaks to me of a momentous and very happy time, and I prefer to conclude with another's words rather than my own: *Infandum jubes renovare dolores*.

471 To NEES VON ESENBECK†

Weimar,
23rd July 1820.

The parcels you so kindly send, my dear Sir, are always so ample that I feel embarrassed every time over what return I can make. I shall begin by enjoying and using what you have sent me to the best of my abilities. Last time you rather led me into temptation; I could venture a few steps towards that dark side only if your faithful hand guided me. But in spite of all my good will I had, even then, to turn back very soon. I simply am not meant for that sort of thing. Whenever my eyes are to be closed and my brain is to cease to rule,

* A collection which had been acquired with the help of the Austrian Empress Maria Ludovica, whom Goethe had met in Carlsbad and whom he admired greatly.

† Professor of Botany in Bonn, who had sent Goethe a treatise on *Magnetism* (Hypnotism).

I am much refreshed by falling into a natural sleep. During my most active years Gassner and Mesmer made a great stir and exerted a very wide influence, and I was a friend of Lavater's, who attributed religious significance to this miracle of nature. When I think of all this, it seems strange indeed to me that I was not attracted but behaved like a man walking by a stream and feeling no inclination at all to bathe. And this must have been natural to me or it would not have lasted on into my old age.

As we have so many interests in common, however, in the clear sunlight, on the bright side, let us persevere in walking there. I shall be very glad if you will let me know what you feel about the influence of flowers on man's mind; and if we find ourselves saying what really cannot be put into words, we need not worry too much. After all, any poet if he is modest must admit that he lives in a walking-sleep, and I won't deny that in reality a good many things seem dreamlike to me.

One of them is for instance the public's present approval of my earlier writings which the world greeted in silence, while I was obliged to attribute at least some merit to them, because they swallowed up part of my life. So I would on no account wish to renounce the honour you propose to do me by mentioning me in your 'Handbuch der Botanik', kindly agreeing with me. But I would earnestly beg you to do so in as few words as possible . . .

While I am living at the Botanical Garden myself and devoting all my care in my own way to it, kind gardeners keep bringing me so many different plants that all my window-sills are full. I have had a very pleasant surprise, too, these last few days, with the *mesembryanthemum bicolor*. It had grown during the dull days, the flowers stood closed and hardly noticeable, and then when the morning-sun first shone brighter, every flower revealed an aureole raised towards it, as if doing its best to show its kinship with this heavenly body. Just then, my dear Sir, your letter came, and so I could not but agree with the thoughts you express.

I must not forget to say, too, that I am going on with my experiments with the *bryophyllum calycinum* . . .

Jena,
15th September 1820.

My dear friend, your letter crowned my stay at Carlsbad and then gave food for my thoughts during all these last months, as every day brings some commentary on what you so concisely express . . .

It is my third year here trying to rouse a library from its sleep of death; it really only could be done by re-organising it thoroughly several times. I have been building a greenhouse for wintering the plants from the south, which nowadays oftener make the journey here than we formerly used to go to the Holy Land. This sort of thing makes me use my eyes and has a good effect too, for I am getting some numbers of 'Kunst und Altertum' ready. I'll send you one soon. I hope you will find it both interesting and pleasant.

Let me hear from you from time to time. As for me, I am lucky because as I dictate pages like that for printing, I can always think of my absent friends and feel there is one or the other for whose sake and enjoyment I am working. The third volume of my nature studies will reach you soon . . .

Although in general social life is not very cheering anywhere at present, I must admit I am quite well placed. There is never a lack of people passing through. Sometimes it is the holidays, and both teachers and students are travelling about all over German lands, or it is the season for journeys to and from the baths, and there are countless other occasions. There is never a day but strangers come to see me, and I am glad to spend a few hours with them, never without some benefit. These many different figures, breaking in on my solitude or passing by, give me ideas of the outside world that I could not have got so easily in any other way.

Besides, our whole ducal family, from the grandparents to the grandchildren, live very happily together and accept me in the most friendly and trusting way as part of the old furniture of the house. There's hardly anything else to say.

I might even feel like Polycrates and have to bring some misfortune on myself to propitiate the envious higher powers, but that my dear daughter-in-law, who has already given me one charming little grandson, is in danger, while giving life, of losing her own.

So you see that easy assurance is always provided with its own mute to dampen its tone. Old age in any case knows how to apply this naturally and easily and so we are safe . . .

Jena,
18th September 1820.

The best of welcomes for this new citizen of the world! Though I have said nothing, I have been loyally sharing your anxiety and sufferings, so let us share our joy too. Best greetings to Ottilie and let me know as often as you can how she is; I have no fears for the little boy. My love to you too, and when you are at ease again, come and see me.

1820-1825

Alles ist dahin! Nur eines bleibt:
Die Träne hat uns die Natur verliehen,
Den Schrei des Schmerzens, wenn der Mann zuletzt
Es nicht mehr trägt—und mir noch über alles—
Sie liess im Schmerz mir Melodie und Rede,
Die tiefste Fülle meiner Not zu klagen:
Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt,
Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen wie ich leide.

Torquato Tasso,

5. Akt, 5. Szene

(Die beiden letzten Zeilen von Goethe als
Motto zur Marienbader Elegie verwendet)

All is gone; only one thing remains: Nature has lent us
tears, the cry of pain, when at length a man can bear no
more. And to me, besides, in the midst of my pain, she
has given melody and words to cry the deepest fulness of
my misery. While man in his torment falls silent, a god
gave to me the power to tell my suffering.

Torquato Tasso,

Act 5, Scene 5

(Goethe used the last sentence
as Motto to his Marienbad Elegy)

THOUGH his circle in Weimar and Jena and the visits of an ever increasing number of German and foreign admirers offered much that he valued, yet Goethe was always anxious to widen his scientific connections. Among them, Count Caspar Sternberg played an important part in the last decade of Goethe's life. Sternberg, once Canon of Regensburg, had resigned his post rather than allow a *Te Deum* to be sung in the cathedral after Napoleon's victory at Jena. He retired to his estates in Bohemia, devoted himself to scientific studies, and helped to found the Museum in Prague and to organise regular meetings of the Society of German Doctors and Scientists. Another scientist with whom Goethe frequently corresponded was Nees von Esenbeck, Professor of Botany in Bonn. Goethe's own scientific researches and writings increased steadily and continued to cover meteorology, geognosy, mineralogy, anatomy and the study of fossils. His literary work in the years 1820-25 consisted in various articles of literary criticism, e.g. on Calderon, whom he greatly admired, but more important was that on the Second Part of *Faust*, the completion of *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* and the editing of his correspondence with Schiller. In June 1824 Thomas Carlyle sent him his translation of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, inaugurating thereby a lively correspondence, most interesting to both parties, which ended only with Goethe's death. A still greater joy for Goethe was, in 1822, the dedication to him by Byron of his *Sardanapalus*. Goethe always entertained the highest admiration for Byron, so much so that in the Second Part of *Faust* Byron is symbolised by Euphorion, the child of Faust and Helena, of Northern-Mediaeval and of Greek art and poetry. In 1821 Goethe's friend Zelter brought his pupil, the twelve year old Felix Mendelssohn, to Weimar; he revisited Goethe a few years later and always delighted him with his playing.

Goethe now only left Weimar and Jena in the summer to go to Carlsbad, Teplitz and Marienbad. There in 1821 for the first time he met Frau von Levetzov with her three daughters. He became so charmed by Ulrike, the eldest, that in 1823, when she was nineteen, he wished to marry her. The Grand Duke was also in Marienbad and on Goethe's behalf he made a request to Frau von Levetzov for Ulrike's hand. The reply was non-committal. Goethe spent his seventy-fourth birthday very happily with the Levetzovs on 28th August; a few days later, when he left Bohemia for home, his mood had changed. Parting from Ulrike had affected him deeply; he had not pressed her to accept him, and he left without much hope. In his carriage on the way to Eger he wrote the Marienbader *Elegie*, which tells of his beloved, his love and his renunciation. What this episode meant for Goethe only

showed somewhat later. Early in November he fell seriously ill; his powers of resistance seemed weakened by the uncertainty about Ulrike and by August's violent disapproval of his father's possible marriage. Goethe recovered very slowly, and though he went on corresponding from time to time with Frau von Levetzov, he never met her or Ulrike again, and he avoided the Bohemian baths the next summers.

The year 1825 however proved to be a festive one. In September the jubilee of Carl August's reign of fifty years was celebrated together with his golden wedding. The 7th November of that year was the fiftieth anniversary of Goethe's arrival in Weimar and this too was marked with great celebrations. The Grand Duke's jubilee proclamation was posted throughout the country; Carl August ordered a Jubilee Medal to be struck by D. Rauch in Berlin. The celebrations in Weimar began with music and congratulatory visits and closed with a gala performance of *Iphigenie*. There were so many festivities that Goethe was unable to take part in them all; his son took his place at the Weimar City banquet and read his father's speech of thanks which ended with a call to drink the health of Knebel as Goethe's oldest Weimar friend. Countless individuals sent greetings and gifts; the freedom of Weimar was conferred on Goethe and his descendants in perpetuity; the Faculties of Philosophy, Medicine and Law of the University of Jena each conferred a honorary degree on Goethe, the Faculty of Philosophy giving the same honour—to be bestowed by Goethe himself—also to Eckermann and Riemer as 'his chief assistants in the publication of his Collected Works'. The Faculty of Divinity could not confer a degree on Goethe as a layman, but presented him with an address, and the Senate offered its congratulations in Latin verse.

Jena,
20th October 1820.

Most honoured Sir, my own inclination would have long since led me to greet you in person, had not physical ailments detained me while seeking relief from them on the border of Bohemia. I feel confident, however, in sending this letter, as I am assured by others that you, Sir, would kindly meet the wishes of an ardent geologist.

We have always taken the liveliest interest in your researches into prehistoric plant-life. And of late we have been discussing in particular the remarkable and unusually striking discovery made [in Bohemia] between Czerchowitz and Radnitz.

My immediate wish was to possess some specimens. Indeed, in my younger days I would not have hesitated to travel from Marienbad to see a thing like this with my own eyes.

I dare not risk this now, but am left with the hope that you, Sir, may be kind enough to make up for this by sending me some specimens. This favour was assured me formerly by Herr Direktor von Schreibers, and now Herr Geheimstaatsrat Schweitzer, who was fortunate enough to pay his respects to you in Carlsbad, has renewed it; I therefore repeat my respectful request that I might be sent whatever may be instructive from the first-mentioned finds, in any shape or size. The mail-coach brings me anything without difficulty.

Polizeirat Grüner in Eger led me to hope, Sir, that some important excavation work might be undertaken through your influence on [that extinct volcano], the Kammerberg near Eger. I have made my wishes and views clear to this active man. Next spring, if I am spared to return to that interesting spot, I shall be extremely glad to know what has been decided. What I shall look for most, Sir, is to meet you.

I should esteem myself fortunate if I could send you, Sir, something acceptable from this district here.

I am your Excellency's most
obedient servant.

475 To THE WERNERIAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY
OF EDINBURGH*

Weimar,
19th November 1820.

To receive the honour of the Diploma of the most distinguished

* So called in honour of the late German geologist A. G. Werner.

Wernerian Natural History Society gives me a twofold pleasure; I am offered an unexpected distinction from eminent men and at the same time an opportunity to pay homage once more to the memory of [Abraham Werner], my late master.

I should like to render most sincere tribute to the merits of your worthy President [Mr Jamieson], who spent some time among us, and to send my respects to all the members of your Society. I need surely not apologise for using my native language, for I have been told—and indeed know—that it is well known and used among you.

476 To CARL AUGUST

Weimar,
17th May 1821.

Your Royal Highness will receive with this the number you asked for of the 'Bibliotheca Italiana'. The editors are most excellent men, admirable in their knowledge, insight, presentation and style, but at the same time partisan, unjust, ungenerous, harsh (that's why the editor's name is Acerbi!). I won't deny they often arouse very unpleasant emotions in me. I hope to do our Milanese friends a service once again in my next number of 'Kunst und Altertum', by taking good Manzoni's part against these bitter opponents.

Your estimate of what Longhi has made [with his engravings] is striking, even if it turns out to be exaggerated. I am glad about it, for why should an artist not be like a business man and benefit by circumstances, fashions and prejudices. After all, Scott, the Englishman, made an immense amount by his novels . . .

477 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
13th June 1821.

A sight as pleasing to me as that of [your Lucretius translation], my dear friend, is rare indeed. What memories, what years unfold when I think of your patient labours. May both, present and future, reward your faithful work.

Last night you would have had a most pleasant experience had you been with us, for Chief-Architect Coudray picked up the copy of your Lucretius that was lying on the table and began to read. His reading was good and became better as the spirit of the poems grew on him and he felt inspired by the clarity of your rendering and the easy charm of your lines. It would be a good thing to send

him a copy, without the Latin text, for he likes reading aloud and does it well.

My 'Wanderer' will soon knock at your door; he would have done so already but the bookbinder is holding things up.

The Court has left Weimar and we are living very quietly. I am less likely than ever to stir from here, as I would now have to break a long habit of staying at home. My children take such good care of me that I am fixed here in the greatest comfort; but I shall do my best to rouse myself and I'll come to you first of all.

Greetings to your dear ones, and don't forget when you meet Dr Gries to thank him again and again for the 'Daughter of the Air'. I think it is the most wonderful of Calderon's plays; one of the later ones, I should say. I am most grateful to the translator, who has given such a true and faithful rendering; I shall not fail to praise it to Calderon if we meet hereafter.

Chancellor Müller is kindly taking this with him, so I must finish in haste. With my best wishes.

478 To NEES VON ESENBECK

21st July 1821.

I have been looking through the list of letters that marks my sins of omission, before I leave for the Bohemian baths. And I am sorry to see your name, Sir, almost at the top. I do not feel ashamed about this, but it makes me sad, for it forces me to look at the reason for my silence hitherto.

Several letters to you I had already dictated are still lying here, for I do not know how to say in the best way what has to be said. So let me admit quite shortly that you have wounded me deeply by your paragraph on the 'Colour of Plants'.

With that I have said enough; let me just add the faithful wish that this may not entirely destroy a connection that has given me such pleasure in my old age. At the same time I cannot refrain from roundly stating my views about your work in my next scientific publication. I know, alas, from long experience that such misunderstandings take many years to overcome—more years than are left to me.

I wish you success in all you undertake.

May the happy good understanding between us be restored.*

* Nees replied: 'To have offended your Excellency is the greatest misfortune that could have happened to me'; he revoked the offending passage and the good understanding was restored.

*Eger,
7th September 1821.*

I am heartily glad, my dear Zauper, to find that now that we have met, your affection is unchanged. Let me write at once an aphoristic reply to your Aphorisms.

I am grateful to you for the kind good things you have said about me; and I find that your treatment gives me the special advantage of seeing my own varied works reflected as a whole. For I had never been able to look at them in succession, so they are not present in sequence to my mind.

I should like to praise you first for placing the poet's moral aim and procedure in so clear a light. The public never grasps that the true poet is really only a disguised preacher preaching penitence, trying to prove by the results how fatal an action and how dangerous an outlook may be. But it needs a higher degree of personal culture than one usually finds to realise this. No man who is not his own confessor will understand this sort of exhortation to penitence . . .

You would like the author not to make any personal complaint when his work is attacked. I agree with this about literary productions and I have mostly acted upon it. The author cannot expect that sort of work to be of any immediate use, so he can placidly watch it gain its own place and influence now or later. But it is different with scientific matters. The value of science lies in its usefulness, teaching man the endless use to be made of advantages long hidden and misjudged, then brought to light or re-discovered. False knowledge hinders and even distorts their application. We should and must denounce it . . .

480 To Frau HENRIETTE HASENCLEVER† *Weimar,*
5th December 1821.

Your letter, my dearest, evokes serious thoughts. So my excellent friend is gone too, she who with my sister formed our circle of young people, lovingly drawing them together and guiding them. My whole life long I have remembered those happy days and the angelic gentleness, the true intelligence, the faithful affection that distinguished her, who has now left us, from so many,

* Author of a theory of poetry based on Goethe's works.

† In Ehringhausen, who had notified Goethe of the death of her mother, Johanna Schlosser, née Fahlmer.

many others. She enjoyed a long life, and those she leaves behind are fortunate in having grown up with her example before them.

The course of my career and my life have unfortunately separated me from the friends of my youth and from a number of dear relations. Though distant, they have, however, always been in my mind and heart and I have been glad to hear of their well-being whenever news brought me assurance of it. And through my children I now have won a still wider and larger family, for they became friendly with [my nephew] Nicolovius and his good children. They got to know them well after several visits on both sides in which I took my own eager share . . .

481 To ABRAHAM MENDELSSOHN*

Weimar,
5th December 1821.

If your gifted, brilliant and expert Felix could see how often I turn round at dessert and look across to the piano, he would feel how greatly I miss him and what a joy his presence was to me. Since these very welcome friends left, all has grown quiet and silent again here. It was most delightful to find my home so full of life directly after my long absence; the contrast on these dull short winter days is, alas, all the more striking. So I send you my very best wishes for your 'complete family orchestra', and am looking forward to Fräulein von Pogwisch vividly describing for me the happiness your family circle enjoys.

My most sincere thanks for having entrusted this dear pledge to us for so long. When we grow old, nothing comforts us more than to watch unfolding talents that promise to cover a long stretch of life with a succession of important strides. My kindest regards to your household and friends. I shall always be glad to hear the best news, through good Zelter, on our young virtuoso's progress.

482 To CARL AUGUST†

Weimar,
12th April 1822.

Your Royal Highness has given me a great deal of enjoyment by graciously lending me this book which I now return with many thanks. It is the first tale of Hoffmann's that I have read, and I

* After Zelter had brought his pupil, the twelve years old Felix Mendelssohn, to visit Goethe.

† With a copy of *Meister Floh* by the Romantic writer E. T. A. Hoffmann.

cannot deny that there is a certain compelling charm in his extraordinary manner of linking the most familiar scenes, the most ordinary—even common—conditions with improbable, impossible happenings.

The publisher will benefit by this little book having enjoyed a passing dubious fame because of its title. But the readers who expect something improper in it, will be quite disappointed. The writer is far too clever to take any risk that might ruin a safe career in which he is making such a success as an author.

483 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

*Marienbad,
7th July 1822.*

Writing to you again about myself here, my dear son, I almost feel I must let you know at once about [Mr Buch], that Ultra-Vulcanist; but it is really too ridiculous and yet too subtle; I suspect there is some trickery behind it all. So let us keep it till later when we are enjoying a glass of wine together again about midnight.

It does not matter here what the weather is like, it is interesting as long as it is variable and doesn't turn out rainy all the time like last year. The cloud-formations up here are very beautiful and very varied, particularly as one is usually able to observe them all at the same time. Just now, for instance, there are some very light cirrus clouds high up in the east, while lower down a great storm is drawing ominously nearer.

The rest of my work is getting on fairly well. I drink the waters twice a day and bathe every third day. This brings movement to the organism and shakes it up, so that the mind does not always retain control; I have to be careful to make use of the good hours as well as I can.

I am in as good quarters as last year and even better, for I have the use of a balcony. In itself this would be invaluable, but the draught makes it hardly usable. Meanwhile I have already got out the collection of stones again, arranged it methodically, filled some gaps with Stadelmann's help and made it three or four times the size.

Count Sternberg, who has been informed of my stay here by me and by passing friends, intends to arrive on the 11th; he will be accommodated in the same house with us and I shall certainly take advantage of this opportunity to inform myself about all the details of that important coal-formation and the plant-remains in it. I

shall see to it that your collection, which, I expect, will be arranged by my return, will receive the finest additions.

Herr Hauptmann von Seebach has arrived and has brought me your parcel; Zelter's letter in it was a special pleasure to me. One must acknowledge that he is extremely competent in all he does, and in this case it is indeed remarkable for a Minister to pay for a journey of forty miles to be taken to see an elderly musical connoisseur and, on the way, to visit all institutions concerned with singing. They have, of course, great sums for great causes at their disposal.

My last letter gave you the commission to send the two lottery tickets back to Dumont; I left them in my bureau, in the small drawer below the left-hand roll-shutter.

My greetings to everyone, and if you have a chance to convey my regards to their Highnesses, do so, and so farewell. I am writing from here to Boisserée direct. Ever Yours.

484 To COUNT STERNBERG

*Eger,
26th August 1822.*

Honoured Sir and friend, may this letter's greetings find you happy, and above all may it say in a few words that it is only after you left me that I could really feel and enjoy the happiness your presence brought me. So let the after-effect of our belated meeting be all the more happy and vivid.

First of all then, and going back to former years and to your ['Journey through the Tyrol, etc.'], I went with you on your happy and altogether profitable travels; and I recalled a similar journey of my own from Regensburg to Roveredo. By Lake Garda I found myself at your side and was grateful to you for recording the observations you made on precipitous ways and through inhospitable mountains, sparing these wearisome paths to your readers who can now call up each scene in turn.

But now it will be best for me to keep to chronological order. The morning after you left, Keferstein arrived here from Halle on a geological excursion to the Upper Palatinate. He hoped to find you still here. He seems well-informed, keen, with energy and initiative about what interests him.

The geological collections of the Eger district for Prague, Tepl and Eger were numbered, catalogued and neatly arranged on the large table.

On the 3rd of August I went with Polizeirat Grüner to Falkenau, to Bergmeister Ignatius Loessl's, where we saw a fine collection of minerals and much appreciated the good man's kindness in letting us have some of his duplicates. I hope he will do something for the Prague Museum too.

I have been shown the poems of a local self-taught poet, called Fuernstein; they are most creditable. He has been crippled with gout since the age of seven, but his head is certainly well grown, his brain would do honour to the straightest limbs. Wonderful that such very fine people are there in all the odd corners of the earth. Man's spirit, though crushed by the bitterest of suffering, is once more vindicating itself.

On Sunday the 4th we arrived about noon at Hartenberg where we were welcomed by Count [Auersperg]. Talk of the year's progress was bound to make interesting conversation. The teacher from a school for making Brussels lace at Gossengrün was there, and she very kindly demonstrated this very delicate art to me. The Count owns some fine mineral specimens, in particular . . . So the day went by as we talked of this and that. On the 5th we were back in Eger.

On Tuesday the 6th the Prague musician Tomaschek came to see me and played charming settings of some of my poems. On Wednesday the 7th we went to Schoenberg; the Capellenberg there has many interesting features. Great masses of the elements composing granite, side by side. A few days later we visited the priest there, and he gave us generously from his collection; Polizeirat Gruener is to send specimens for the Museum. One of them is a most beautiful feather-like mica.

On Sunday 11th, we went to Waldsassen, admiring and grieving over the empty monastery-buildings, which looked like an empty snail shell. From there I went to Redwitz, now ceded to Bavaria, but formerly joined to Eger. Herr Fikentscher's factory deserves one's admiration. His son, an able chemist, at once made me some perfect opaque glass discs. He was not so successful with the entoptic ones, but he is going on trying. They supply an important glass-works, and any observant person is bound to come across glass like this. On that bright day some quickly cooled bulb-tubes and glass rods showed the phenomenon perfectly on a black mirror. I have left the young man with a hastily assembled entoptic apparatus with two black mirrors. We must try now to spread this gospel more quickly. I shall tell you in due course how von Henning has been

getting on with it in Berlin. I am very glad to hear how useful your participation in the journey has been.

But above all I now want to know if you have quite realised its splendid aim [the joint publication of the book on Brazil by several scientists]. The individual scientist would be saved much trouble and the friend of nature a good deal of money, but the special great gain would be to science itself. We have advanced half a century in a moment, if we can willingly accept what is happening without or against our will—if the individual is merging into the whole, if what one does vanishes at once into what so many others are doing. But perhaps this is not to be. Why would man do anything, unless each thought more of himself than he ought, and tried to make his own little circle complete?

I enclose an inventory of the mineralogical collection sent from here on the 22nd to Inspector Gradl in Marienbad. I have refrained from making any observations on it; these will follow later. If I have the good fortune to come and see your Museum [in Prague], that might lead to many pleasant things for us and others. I have laboured over the detail for so many years, it would refresh my mind greatly to review Bohemia now as a whole.

I have constantly in mind those documents of the *primaeval* world which you so ably put before us. In my usual way I am engaged in fitting them, weaving them into a whole wherever possible.

I was preparing to close and add a friendly farewell, when a package arrived all unexpectedly, sent by the Bohemian National Museum Society to Polzeirat Grüner. It brings me a thorough knowledge of your main principles; I learn from an enclosed statement what has been done until now, besides reading a complimentary mention of the small endeavours of my own which entitled me to count myself a foundation-member. I hope this eminent society will receive my latest contributions too in a friendly and indulgent way; I have at home a good deal more that belongs directly to Bohemia, and I shall not fail to send it.

So please be good enough to tell me where I could address a case from Weimar. Perhaps to Leipzig or Dresden, so that it could come at a reasonable charge.

Polzeirat Grüner has also received the enclosed inventory and he will arrange what he sends accordingly, to avoid anything already included.

Some very fine pieces of wood with iron-ochre through it have

arrived from the mines near Pograd. Polizeirat Grüner is sending you the best of these.

In the meantime I have been studying the source and course of the river Eger before it enters Bohemia; we ought by natural standard to regard all this region as part of Bohemia. And it is the same with the course of the Wondra, the first stream that joins the Eger inside that Kingdom.

So now, on the eve of my departure, let me close, calling myself happy in remembering all the good I have met with, and especially the closer connection with you, my dear friend. From now on I shall note down and let you know in due course anything that might be of interest to you; please do the like for me and continue your tolerant kindness.

Some poetic charm ought perhaps to enliven this letter, so I am enclosing [my translation of] 'The Nosegay' you already know. I have ventured—with poetic-critical boldness—to put [this Czech song] back into six-line verses, but I am not prepared to say that has improved it.

485 To G. F. BENECKE*

Weimar,
12th November 1822.

Most honoured Sir, you could not have reminded me in a more significant way of the happy times when we first knew each other, when I met with the friendliest of welcomes at Göttingen [University], and was able eagerly to pursue my aims with the encouragement of the most eminent scientists.

I can only thank you, quite overcome, for what you now send me. Since this genius appeared, constantly true to his character, endlessly creative, sweeping on irresistibly, so charmingly tender, I have followed every path his course has taken. Friends far and near, all Germany and indeed the world, have done this with me. I have tried by translating to identify myself with him and to join him in his tenderest feeling and his sharpest wit. About this last, only the impossibility of fully comprehending the text, kept me from finishing my translation of his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'.

I had never hoped and hardly dared to wish for such interest from

* Professor and Librarian in Göttingen who had sent the original manuscript of Byron's dedication to Goethe of *Sardanapalus*.

this man I so admire; to receive this testimony, then, to the identity of our views took me all the more by surprise.

I shall be most grateful to you, Sir, if you will tell your English friend Kinnaird of this, meantime, with my sincere thanks for having acted as intermediary.

I am loath to return this precious manuscript; who would find it easy to part with the original of a document of such value? Old age, that ends by losing its faith in itself, needs proofs like this, while a younger person might find their stimulus crushing.

And now let me close, begging you always to continue to remember me kindly.

486 To CARL AUGUST and the GRAND DUCHESS LOUISE

Weimar,
1st January 1823.

Will your Royal Highnesses graciously permit me, after offering my most faithful and sincere good wishes, to lay at your feet a gift which I hope may not be unacceptable?

Some years ago I asked a friend who has connections with the East to procure some real Mocha coffee for me. He was unsuccessful and the matter was forgotten. But now he has written, quite unexpectedly: 'After a number of unsuccessful attempts I have at last managed to procure some real pure Mocha, although only a very small amount. It comes directly from the harem of the Pasha of Egypt to whom a fixed proportion of all Mocha brought in and out of the country - - - has to be paid in kind as customs-duty, not mixed and blended, but picked out, bean by bean.'

This honest man is not in the habit of joking, so I suppose I can take him seriously and send the parcel on as it arrived and without examining it. I hope that with this rarity I have managed to bring you something enjoyable, and I recommend myself to your Royal Highnesses's grace and favour, assuring you of my undying devotion.

485 To NEES VON ESENBECK

Weimar,
2nd February 1823.

Here is the facsimile [of Byron's dedication] you asked for, with hearty thanks for what you wrote and sent by Gräfin Beust, and for the rest that came with it. This is the state of affairs: Lord Byron



Archduke Carl August – copper engraving by C. U. Schwerdgeburth (1824)

intended to dedicate his 'Sardanapalus' to me. He sent the page with the dedication to England; they wanted to let me see this first, but delayed and put it off. Then it was to appear in the second edition of 'Sardanapalus', and at last I got it. I realised the value of a manuscript like this, which had to go back, and quickly had a facsimile made; this will now be all the more valuable as the dedication is not going to be printed; I hear he has now dedicated his tragedy 'Werner' to me. You know I feel this sort of outstanding tribute very deeply, and I add it to the rest of the considerable capital of friendly, sympathetic goodwill which ensures that what is fundamentally my life will endure for all time . . .

The megatherium-tooth is a really remarkable find for Germany and in particular for Bohemia.

I shall be most grateful to you if you include my elephant's skull with Herr d'Alton's description and explanation in your eleventh volume. Seeing the illustrations and reading what Herr d'Alton says is sure to arouse my old interest and call up some ideas out of Lethe. At the moment I have gone too far from the sphere of organic nature; aesthetics and physics are the two extremes between which I divide my time . . .

488 To AUGUSTE GRÄFIN BERNSTORFF* *Weimar,*
17th April 1823.

I was greatly pleased and greatly moved to see once again this writing of well-loved memory, the hand of my dear, my very dear earliest friend, familiar to my heart though my eyes have never seen her. And yet I am hesitating, undecided what I should say in reply. Let me keep to general remarks, as we know so little in detail about each other.

To live long is to outlive many things, people we love or hate, and those we do not care about, kingdoms, great cities, even woods and trees we sowed and planted when we were young. We outlive ourselves, and we are thankful to be left with even some of our bodily and mental gifts. We submit to all these transitory things; if only what is eternal remains present to us in each moment, the passing of time cannot make us suffer.

My whole life long I have dealt honestly with myself and others, throughout my worldly concerns looking ever to what is highest.

* Née Gräfin Stolberg, who after almost half a century had written to adjure Goethe to 'turn his eyes and heart from earth to Heaven'.

That is what you and those about you have also done. So let us go on working while it is yet day for us. There will be another sun for others too; they will do their work by it, while a light that is greater will shine on us.

Let us not be troubled about the future. In our Father's kingdom are many provinces; He has prepared such a happy sojourn for us here, He will surely have cared for both of us yonder. We then may even succeed in what we have missed here, meeting face to face and coming to love each other more deeply. Let this reassure you in your faithful thought of me.

I wrote this soon after I received your dear letter [last October], but I dared not send it off, for years ago I unwittingly and unwillingly wounded your excellent brother with such remarks. But now I am just returning from death to life after an illness, I shall send this off after all to tell you myself that He who governs all things still grants me to see the beautiful light of His sun. May the day seem friendly to you too, and may you think of me with kindness and love, as I never cease to remember the days which still saw those who afterwards were parted working harmoniously together.

May we all meet again in the arms of the all-loving Father.

489 To NEES VON ESENBECK

Weimar,
24th April 1823.

My dear Sir, your welcome gifts keep arriving one after another, and for the moment all I can send is a grateful word. But your kindly sympathy over my illness and recovery makes me certain that this renewed correspondence holds much promise for the future.

And now you have called this magnificent and rare plant after me, making me its godfather, and giving my name an honoured place in science. As you yourself realise and mention, I find this doubly moving at the present moment. I nearly gave up hope of recovery, and now all this kindness and the public proof of it all showered upon me—it gives rise to a feeling I must not yield to; I shall have to try to keep my balance . . .

Your recent excellent description of this ['Goethea'] increases the value of the gift. If it were later possible to let me see a reproduction in colour, I should be altogether in your debt . . .

*Weimar,
22nd June 1823.*

Your letter, my dear and valued friend, came at a strange moment which made it doubly interesting. Schiller's letters had just been collected, and looking through them, I find the clearest traces of that happy and fruitful time we spent together. It began on 13th June 1794 with the invitation to the 'Horen'. And as it goes on every letter increases and heightens my respect for this remarkable mind, and the joy at its influence on all our culture. These letters are an endless treasure such as you too possess. They have brought us a long stage forward, but we must now re-read them to guard ourselves against the backward steps which our precious contemporaries daily and hourly invite us to make.

You can imagine, dear friend, how welcome your coming will be to me at this time. I have thought a good deal about it, and would like to advise you to come about the end of October. If the gods haven't other things in store for us, you will then certainly find me and all you love and value here; there will be a pleasant variety of intimate conversations and social pleasures. Above all we can enjoy Schiller's correspondence, for you will also bring several years of his letters, and now in this rich and fruitful present we shall once more enjoy the earlier blossom and be uplifted . . .

491 To the SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE BOHEMIAN
MUSEUM*

*Marienbad,
16th August 1823.*

Last year President Count Sternberg drew the attention of geological amateurs and collectors to the extremely remarkable effect, gentle, yet powerful and uninterrupted, which the waters of the Marienquelle exert on the hardest rock. We have tried during this past year to follow up his suggestions and to use favourable opportunities to collect stones affected in this way. We are now in a position to display a collection of the most diverse types of rock, altered and completely changed in the most different ways according to their nature and composition.

We feel it is only right that the Prague Museum should be offered this collection. It is at the top of the small case to be sent off shortly; please unpack it with care as most of the pieces are brittle . . .

* In Prague, with a mineralogical collection.

In a detailed essay I shall try to show how what I have learned on that much-disputed subject [of the changes effected on rocks by subterranean fires], links up with the present problems of science . . .

I should like to make public in this way the respectful gratitude I feel to the most admirable National Museum and its eminent patrons for their outstanding goodwill and kindness in receiving me into their active membership.

492 To Frau OTTILIE VON GOETHE *Marienbad,*
18th August 1823.

Your letter, my very charming daughter, seemed to fall from another world into the midst of these daily shifting interests here. Among their diverse whirling elements a certain illusion is moving, increasing the evils of which one would like to be rid. And when you recognise that there is also much that is good, unrecognised till it is past, you will realise how bitter-sweet is the cup I have drunk to the dregs and drained.

You will understand how deeply and solemnly Byron's farewell affected me just now; it is like being at a masqued ball and unexpectedly hearing of something really vital affecting us for life. I did not doubt his kindly reception of my poem to him which I wrote and sent in all sincerity of feeling. But only such an inspired youth could have used this strange situation to enhance the value of these lines and make such a significant response to them . . .

And now, my dear, here are some last lines from Marienbad. This letter started off with some rather gloomy thoughts, but I can end it in cheerful spirits. Everything has gone well, beyond what I had thought and hoped, and pleasingly for heart, mind and soul . . .

I leave here on Wednesday, 20th; Police inspector Grüner [of Eger] is calling for me and will lead me back among the rocks—dead things and yet as a *pis-aller* interesting enough.

Of these old earthly things as well as of the youngest heavenly ones I have had some precious experience; there were some beautiful happenings, the pity is though that I cannot write to you about them. But have patience, and the quiet winter evenings will be the time for confidences; that will anyway have the advantage of bringing the confiding friend and his confidante into a relationship with its own particular character. May that all turn out as I imagine and hope . . .

Eger,
21st August 1823.

I am sure our charming Ulrike will turn to look at what I am sending with that happy little face that suits her so well. The piano music is from Grandpapa, the voice-parts from the well-known friend who hopes they may sometimes give pleasure.

And how is your dear Mother? and her lovely children? A thousand greetings, good wishes and so on.

Ever your faithful, but this time your impatient.

Eger,
24th August 1823.

Your welcome lines, my very good friend, reached me at a very happy moment, and before I leave Bohemia's magic circle, you shall have a letter as we arranged. You will receive it all the more kindly and affectionately, as I have nothing but good news to give you.

First of all then, I have spent the last little while in Marienbad without any cares, in fact gay, and as if coming back to life . . .

It is dreary hearing political talk wherever one is listening; to escape from such things and from aesthetic conversations and lectures, I devoted myself for six weeks to a very pretty young girl,* and so was quite safe from any worries from outside.

But the greatest wonder of all is really this: the prodigious power music has had over me lately. At Mme Mildner's voice and Mme Szymanovska's richness of tone, even at the public performances given by the local *chasseurs*, I relax like a clenched fist opening in friendship. I explain it to myself partly like this: for over two years now I have heard no music at all (except Hummel twice). So if indeed I was born with any organ for the appreciation of music, it had closed and vanished. But now great talents bring heavenly music surging in upon me, asserting its whole power over me, assuming its rightful place and waking all my slumbering memories. Before your choir in the *Singakademie* had sung one bar, I am sure, I should almost have to leave the hall. When I now think of hearing once only every week an opera as we produce them ('Don Giovanni' for instance, or 'Il Matrimonio Segreto') renewing it for myself and letting these higher feelings mingle with those of an active life,

* Ulrike von Levetzov.

when I think of it, I realise what it means to do without a delight of this kind; like all man's exalted delights it lifts him out of and above himself, beyond the things of this world.

How pleasant it would be, how good indeed for me, to spend some time with you! Your advice and gradual guidance would cure me of a morbid sensibility which after all is the cause of the phenomenon I have described. By degrees you would make me capable of absorbing the whole fulness of this most glorious revelation of God. Now I must get through a winter without sound and form and I rather dread it. But we will try with the help of good humour and courage to use even the dark days to our own and our friends' advantage . . .

495 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

*Carlsbad,
30th August 1823.*

Your affectionate letter arrived just at the right moment and gave me great pleasure. The enclosed will tell you of good and amusing things, even that your father had to dance into his new year of life. I must say it is a long time since I felt so well in body and mind; I do hope I bring this energy and happiness back with me among you. To tell the truth it is caused partly by a permanent interest and partly by one that is constantly changing. But I am convinced that your love will help me to carry the summer over into the winter.

I am looking forward to a number of things that I shall find have arrived at home, and to the prospect of a good deal of work I have not been able to go on with here. And the publication of the next numbers [of 'Kunst und Altertum'] will fill the passing days, not without pleasure and profit.

As you see I have met the Poles, too, as friends; if I had not been really reserved, I should soon have been quite pulled to shreds.

The weather continues beautiful, the barometer remaining very high. The heat, however, prevents a good many visits and contacts with others one would have liked to have had. My old friend Mme Jaraczewska lent me the 'Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon' and I enjoyed it very much. Tell Ottilie I seem to remember her praising it to me. And I am reading Sir Walter Scott's 'The Black Dwarf'; so she can see I would make some progress in the most recent English literature if I remained for any time in this half sociable, half solitary state . . .

Getting ready to leave Eger, I put a sheet of paper in front of me and take my pen in hand. At once I find how much there is to say and how little can be put into words. Think, my dear friend, of these past weeks, especially of the very last ones; you will find my gratitude woven through each one of these days and I cannot and would not unravel it now. I shall leave everything to your kind heart, that will do all for the best in my stead.

And I will do the same with the daughter. She is not inclined to be generous with words, so she will excuse it if this time I too hold them back. But if my little dear (and she cannot refuse to be that to me) will repeat to herself sometimes what she knows by heart already, that is to say my inmost feelings, she will say it all better than I could in my present state. And I hope she will not deny it is charming to be loved, even if her friend sometimes seems annoying.

Everybody keeps congratulating me on my healthy cheerfulness and I thank them all most kindly. I like to hear it; it reminds me of all the cures that have led to it. If it continues so, I shall bring it back to its source, and if it is lost, I know where to find it again.

Thank [your daughter] Amélie most warmly for the last evening; I never doubted she was as she showed herself then. And tell her that when she is reciting, if she will avoid exaggeration (without being at all self-conscious), there could hardly be a young woman more welcome and more charming to her family, her friends and society in general.

That delightful child, Bertha, too, has such beautiful deep tones in her voice; when she is reciting I hope she thinks of me and begins suitable passages on a deep note so as to be able to rise later to a climax.

Forgive my playing the schoolmaster from a distance—how gladly I would do it on the spot! For when I see natural gifts and the beginning of good training, I feel I have to point out those first obstacles that often hold one up far too long.

I wish Count Taufkirchen heartily well . . . But I cannot forgive him, in spite of his interesting stories, for having spoilt our evening's reading to which I—and perhaps someone else—had been so looking forward. I hope Ulrike thinks of me kindly on these occasions and remembers affectionately my few remarks; if so, I am sure that in

a short time her way of reciting, so attractive through her natural charm, will lack nothing whatever in depth.

And this brings me back into the dear circle from which I tried to tear myself, back to the round table, between mother and daughter, opposite the sisters, as one of the family.

The small space left warns me to finish. I must not take a fresh sheet or I should go on for ever. But I must thank you most warmly for the glimpses you gave me into your earlier days. I feel it links me more closely and nearly with you. And to your daughter, too, I must say I have learned to love her more and more as I knew her better, and now I want to prove to her in person that I know her, know what she likes and dislikes, hoping that I may succeed.

497 To BOISSERÉE

Weimar,
12th December 1823.

Your affectionate letter, my very dear friend, reached me yesterday evening, and I am beginning the day with a hasty reply. It will be best for me to tell things in chronological order if I am to make my eight-months' silence at least understandable, though not excusable.

Diligent though I was this spring, I barely managed to finish a number of 'Kunst und Altertum' and something on morphology. I spent July, August and part of September in Bohemia, partly engaged in my old researches about the mountains, partly refreshing myself in cheerful company. Even poetry did not come off empty-handed, to my joy and that of my sympathetic friends. I stayed in Eger till mid-September and I wrote several letters to various friends from there. Your name was on the list too; but it is always the same, at the end of a stay away from home, one's travelling carriage driving up to the door always takes one by surprise.

I was hardly home again when Minister Schultz of Berlin came to see me. He merits more attention, trust and respect than many of his name.

Count Reinhard and his family arrived too at the same time; we kept his birthday merrily and duly. And for the rest he has told you himself what a pleasant, happy time we had together.

As soon as he had gone, an incomparable pianist, Mme Szymanowska, arrived. Her charming presence and priceless talent had already been a great joy to me in Marienbad and now my house here was

for a fortnight the rendezvous of every music-lover, drawn there by her lofty art and lovable nature. Inspired by her, both Court and town lived on in an atmosphere of music and joy.

Directly she left, I had a visit from Herr von Humboldt, the Minister, one of the real old friends from Schiller's time. With him it was easy to take up the past, join the threads and spin them out, right into the present.

His place was immediately taken by Professor Zelter, coming from the Rhineland. That meant a new kind of unreserved exchange of thoughts, which is still going on now.

All this sounds very well and good, if only it had gone on smoothly. But on the 1st of November I unfortunately caught a violent cold. It had the most serious after-effects, particularly as I began by neglecting to take any reasonable measures against it, for my own doctor, who knows my constitution, was seriously ill himself. Spasms of coughing took such a hold on me that for a fortnight I had to spend my nights on a chair, in a state that makes no distinction between day and night and contrasted strangely with the social life going on round me. Fortunately, however, this grave outward evil did not go deep and my real self lived tranquilly on like the nut in a prickly shell. That made it possible for me to show my friends that I kept my interests and to supply hints and suggestions for a new number of 'Kunst und Altertum', and to get on with something on morphology.

A course of baths is now ridding me gradually of these spasms and I am getting back to my usual active life. But I am going cautiously, for obviously I had been doing too much just after my return from Marienbad when I ought to have gone rather slow. That was bad for me and lent a hand to unlucky chance.

And now let me speak of these very successful activities of yours. I am looking forward greatly to what you are sending . . .

I am not very pleased that my earlier works have now got into the whirl of French literature. There is little more than my name left in them all. The French critics tell me much that is new and speak about my work so favourably that I have nothing to add. The best that has come of it all is that the authentic dialogue by Diderot, 'Le Neveu de Rameau' has been published by Brière. Do read it at once, if you have not already done so. I am ready to acknowledge what is said in the preface they put to my name; at least it is what I would have said . . .

Now finally think of the chief task that remains to me in my old

age; putting my literary legacy safely into order and at least beginning on a complete edition of my works. This would be quite impossible but for the assistance of nice young people who have formed their minds by studying me closely, who understand me thoroughly, can read my intentions and are prepared to deal sensibly and intelligently in my stead with the still remaining mass of papers and their content. This work too went on uninterruptedly during my late illness . . .

498 To Frau AMALIE VON LEVETZOV *Weimar,*
31st December 1823.

I owe the Old Year so much that is beautiful and good, it must not go without another word of greeting and thanks to my dear friends. November did not treat me very well, but looking at the last day of the year and further towards the coming longest one, gives me fresh courage and hope. May all this bring fulfilment of my wishes . . .

A dear slender child thinking of me and bending to pick up a little stone for me, adds one more to the hundred attitudes in which I see her and one more joy to me. For she does not want to withhold the fruits of her care for me . . .

I still have one page, enough room for only the slightest expression of my feelings and wishes. But at the same time the new calendar for 1824 hangs there on the wall, its twelve months looking fresh and clean, but perfectly indifferent. It is in vain to try to see which are to be the red-letter days for me and which the dark ones. The whole page is still blank, while my wishes and hopes fly to and fro. May mine meet with yours! May nothing, nothing come in the way of contentment and fulfilment! Discuss it all together in one of those hours of confidence, just as it would have to be talked over in detail walking up and down on the terrace. And do not leave me too long without knowing the next step which depends entirely on what you allow. Where and how have my thoughts to seek you? . . .

499 To ZELTER *9th January 1824.*

I looked through my folders with the letters of 1802 to recall the circumstances of that period, and there I found beautiful words from you, friendly and wise, still fresh to-day. And now these

weeks of trial we spent together [last November] served to add some more spans to the lengthy fabric of my life. Together and apart we have lived through joy and sorrow enough these last twenty years, and your kindly presence has again given me heart in my painful circumstances. I myself always felt and knew this, and now I am glad to have it recognised by others too, who never properly understand what one man can be to another and do for him.

Your sympathy seemed to make me a present of my ['Marienbader Elegie'] as soon as I had shown it to you. Your settings of my poems have always been like gifts to me, but it was characteristic of you that you wished to read this one over and over again, and that you were willing to let me hear it so often in your gentle sympathetic voice. I hardly like to own even to myself how dear this poem is to me, and I feel it is mine all the more since you have made it your own too. I cannot part with it, but if we had lived together, you would have had to read and sing it to me till you knew it by heart.

The part of your travel-diary which you sent is being copied out, and together with the still outstanding ones will be entered in the Codex and the whole then forwarded to you. I have read parts of it with friends who all welcomed it with particular interest; it will come to your home, for you and yours, with every blessing on it.

I enclose a letter of my Mother's that you asked for. Like every line she wrote it shows a woman bred in Old Testament piety, who led a life of staunch trust in the unchanging God of her people and kin. Announcing the approach of death, she ordered her funeral arrangements precisely, specifying the kind of wine and the size of the cakes for the mourners.

May I now remind you of my request: to hear more about the raising in the voice with a rising of the barometer. Just write it down as it comes to you, beginning with that single example from before my birthday to where the pen stops.

Ottilie is rushing about in Berlin now and will go on doing so from hour to hour till she is forced to pause from time to time. Perhaps, having achieved her aim of entering by the Brandenburg gateway again, she will somewhat modify her restlessness, though one can hardly imagine her without it. I know you will show her every kindness; the best, however, cannot be achieved without exciting her lively nature.

I should however tell myself that I ought to have taken care of my health earlier, that is as soon as I got home last autumn, and that I ought to be careful now. My excessive sensibility which, as you know, showed itself already when I listened to music in Bohemia, is dangerous for me. And yet, I cannot really quarrel with it, for I owe it this poem that is such a constant refreshment to my feelings and imagination.*

I shall shortly be forwarding to you the second half of the paper I sent, and a new one is already begun. In the field of natural history some things from outside fortunately happened to agree with my own endeavours, and I hope soon to be able to state a number of conclusions and to finish several chapters for the time being. For this too it is necessary to shut oneself off from the foolishly shifting scientific world. The number of incapable people who have influence and who build on one another's inanity, is very great; everything is not quite in order even with important people. But one can and must console oneself, for after all there are really excellent people too, on whom one can set one's hopes now and in the future . . .

All good spirits be with you.

500 To NEES VON ESENBECK† *Weimar,*
29th January-2nd February 1824.

My dear Sir, what you have sent me was a great pleasure to see and led to instructive conversation. The enclosed note shows what the Weimar art-lovers have to say about the plate which is a very good one on the whole. I was really pleased to see that these old, old drawings are now to be put to a scientific use. For me they are in some way out of date, but I took trouble, care and pains over making them at the time. I am, however, also painfully aware of having become more or less a stranger to this very interesting subject.

You ask me to say a few words on the plates, but I cannot even say a single one, for it would only be an overbold attempt at dealing with something that for me is a stone of Sisyphus, always sliding

* The poem *Aussöhnung*.

† He had sent plates with Goethe's old drawings of an elephant tooth, illustrating one of Nees' own publications.

back downhill. It is a burden I am glad to see others have now rolled up to the highest peak.

My articles on 'Morphology' contain all that can be said from a scientific point of view about these plates; they date from a time when my chief endeavour was to develop the osteological type of the higher animal species; hence my concentration on younger creatures where the sutures have not disappeared into each other. In addition to this general interest there was a particular one: to ascertain more precisely the relation of the canine tooth to the upper jaw and the intermaxillary bone. For this I examined the skull itself and made use of the neat drawings from it.

I cannot say more; but I trust that Herr d'Alton, an expert on this subject, who has formerly shown interest in these reproductions, will be good enough to look kindly at them; he is certain to be able to recommend them to the scientific public with a few masterly strokes. I had hoped to discuss this in detail with him too, and that is another reason why I am distressed he did not call here. It would have enabled me to understand his delightful writings more fully; for a few hours of conversation are worth thousands of distant intercourse.

My son and I had already arranged good examples of all the fossil bones found in the quarries of volcanic rock here, and I was already looking forward to the completed skeleton of the aurochs being thoroughly explained, helping me quickly over a number of doubts and obstacles. But these hopes were disappointed. So I fell back into studying the geognosy of Bohemia and cannot now extricate myself again.

It is curious that old age has to be careful over so much more than one thinks and one cannot pass quickly from one interest to another unscathed. It is dangerous to dissipate one's energies over several things. Particularly so if one is obliged—as I was last November—to keep oneself going and in action in spite of bodily ills, one is then all too aware that the outside world asks as much and more of us now than what we could give when our mental and physical powers still acted in complete harmony.

Excuse all these reflections. I am sure you would prefer—and rightly—to see a fair-sized article explaining the plates. But it is just my endeavour to meet your wish that brings me to these reflections, which I am confident you will kindly accept. Should Herr d'Alton not feel disposed to discuss the plates—though I am sure he has a hundred observations at his disposal—I know you will

find the right thing to say to excuse and postpone. I am very ready to do whatever you suggest, if I am able to make the rivulets of my thoughts flow into these valleys again.

Now, however, I must not deviate from the scientific paper.

Please give my greeting to Herr d'Alton; his staying away has left much stranded that ought to have taken the water.

Admittedly the colossal cryptogamic creature deserves to take its place beside the huge rafflesia; my thanks to you and to your brother for your speedy information. What strange faces these sturdy seeds make, brought on by damp and warmth!

When you see creatures like this, you think you catch sight of nature at the moment of bringing forth the Giant Sloth.

But now I have had the second number of Heusinger's 'Historiography' by me for some days, and I see how easy it is for nature to form a constantly varying tissue out of living shapeless mucus, and in this to appear, according to pressing circumstances or its own arbitrary whim, disguised as soft and rigid, etc., gloomy and gay, etc., ugly and beautiful, etc. You may attribute this figurative speech to the days of the masked balls, when from old-established custom and bias, people still have recourse to me.

My interest and confidence are Yours.

501 To Frau CAROLINE VON WOLZOGEN* *Weimar,*
22nd March 1824.

I am most grateful to you, dear friend, for broaching a subject that means so much to me. Let me say at once—shortly, as usual—that I entirely agree with your suggestion in the main. I find it very suitable for you to write to Cotta on the subject; now is the time to do so. In the latest number of 'Kunst und Altertum' I published Schiller's letters of 1802, holding very little back; they give a picture of a lofty, pure, serene, genuine friendship and are certain to increase the public's eagerness and the publisher's interest. But before you take any further step I should be glad to have a talk with you, and suggest coming early on Wednesday.

Please give my very kindest regards to your sister. This fresh beginning of a former friendship is most welcome to me. I enclose Humboldt's letters.

* Schiller's sister-in-law who had suggested the publication of the Schiller-Goethe Correspondence.

502 To F. J. M. P. AUBERT DE VITRY* *Weimar,*
29th March 1824.

Honoured Sir, I must beg you to excuse my delay in answering your letter [of last November]; my age and health do not always allow me to discharge my duties promptly.

When I try to think what I could reply, I can only say I entirely share the views you give in your letter; so I need only express myself in a very few words.

Every writer must know what, under certain conditions and circumstances, he can bring to his own countrymen, and the French author is more restricted in this than the German. When he translates he has in some sort to transform. I have always been conscious of this and it never surprised me that my works were translated in this way. The same thing happened with the re-translation of my 'Rameaus Neffe', with the 'Hommes célèbres de France au 18e siècle' and with the entire remodelling of my short play 'Die Geschwister'. Here the translators had to depart completely from the original in order to draw closer to the understanding and taste of their own countrymen.

There are besides a few outward circumstances that require some additions, some interpolated views, quite contrary to the original author's conception. I regard all this as the result of the first necessity I have mentioned. Having agreed to it in general, one must accommodate oneself to it in detail too.

It only remains to thank you, Sir, most sincerely for your kindly interest in my works and in the events of my life . . .

503 To Frau AMALIE VON LEVETZOV *Weimar,*
13th April 1824.

At last March is over, the sun is higher now, I see clumps and rows of snowdrops, crocuses and other pretty early flowers in front of my window, and I can think of my dear friends gathered cosily in the evening round the table and ready to keep a place there for me too. Up till now I have only been able to picture you in society, at balls or the theatre, and not without attentive admirers; and I could not help envying them . . .

I hope the dear children are happy and well. I can just picture them out of doors, in the poultry-yard or on the hill with the hares;

* Translator of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

sometimes indeed I seem to have been, or feel I should be, there too.

I had written as far as this at the beginning of the month, and there was still a good deal left in the pen that wouldn't run off it. But now this letter must start without further delay to where I should like to bring it myself, though at the moment I should not know where to take it.

Do not forget me, either you or your daughters, and let me hope the dear children will welcome me at my accustomed place when I arrive with the same feelings and bringing a few interesting things to read . . .

504 To ZELTER

26th June 1824.

I am so pleased that you have taken to 'Troilus and Cressida', or rather that it has taken hold of you. I have always declared that I detest all writers of parody and travesty, but only because this vile swarm drags down everything beautiful, noble and great, in order to destroy it. I don't like these means used, even against shams.

But the Ancients and Shakespeare put something altogether precious, dignified and pleasing in the place of what they seem to take away. That is the reason why this work captivated and charmed you, and satisfied you in just the right way . . .

505 To C. L. F. SCHULTZ*

27th June 1824.

I was very pleased indeed to get your dear letter . . . Letting me know something more of your present position will always be the best reply you could make to my constant and faithful affection.

I have been going steadily along in my own way. An unfortunate attack of catarrh restricted me to my own company for a while, and I was able to go on quietly, following the thread that runs through my whole life.

I have been successful too over the theory of meteorology. In my own mind at least I have separated what is certain from what is uncertain, and I consider that a substantial gain on such a problematic topic . . .

Do tell me something about Ernst Stiedenroth. I have been happy these last four weeks with his 'Psychology'. It is very pleasant indeed to see one's inner life, one's aims and activities placed outside

* In Berlin.



C. L. von Knebel – chalk drawing by Ries

one. This is the first time I have seen what is obscure and abstruse interpreted by the ordinary reasoning that after all is the only thing that gives us inner contentment. The whole exposition is wonderfully comprehensive, and whatever the truth of the matter may be, one does at least for the time feel one has comprehended the incomprehensible . . .

506 To THOMAS CARLYLE*

Weimar,
30th October 1824.

My dear Sir, I did not at once announce the safe arrival of your welcome translation [of my 'Wilhelm Meister'] but this was only because I was unwilling to write simply a receipt and meant to add a few considered words on your work which does me such honour.

My advanced age, however, burdened with so many inevitable obligations, gave me no leisure for comparing your version with the original text, and this might be a harder task for me than for a third person thoroughly familiar with both German and English literature. But I now see an opportunity to have this letter taken safely to London by Count Bentinck and at the same time to procure for both of you a pleasurable acquaintance. Let me, therefore, express most warmly and without delay my thanks for your great interest in my literary works and in the events of my life. And let me earnestly beg you to continue this in the future. I may perhaps hear more from you; I enclose some poems which you can hardly have seen as yet, but which I venture to hope may be of some interest to you. With sincere wishes.

507 To A. W. SCHLEGEL†

Weimar,
15th December 1824.

. . . I have never had any doubts that whatever you took in hand would be successful and become important. I have been following your work on the literature of India with great interest though only at some distance. It is a pleasure to see your critical ability and skill as a translator both readily aiding your creative genius.

I cannot appreciate Indian art aright; it distracts and confuses the imagination instead of concentrating and controlling it. But I

* With a copy of the *Festgedichte*.

† After receiving his translation of the *Bhagavid-Gita*.

am one of the most sincere and faithful admirers of Indian literature; it leads us in a truly wonderful way from the most abstruse regions of the mind through every stage of thought and the outward senses, and so deserves our highest admiration . . .

Let me add as a postscript my good wishes for health and all good fortune to further your great undertaking, the translation of the 'Ramayana'. And I should like to take the liberty now of subscribing for a copy of the four instalments of this work for his Highness's Library at Weimar.

508 To KNEBEL*

*Weimar,
24th December 1824.*

My best wishes for a very happy New Year come with this portrait. I hope you will give it a friendly glance from time to time . . .

May next year be a good one for us and our families. As for me, I shall be pleasantly occupied, for I can see plenty to do for the next three hundred and sixty five days. And you too have kept up so many interests, you won't ever feel without them day and night.

I have enjoyed working on my 'Correspondence with Schiller'; it is almost ready for publication now and it has made several things clearer to me. It ended in 1805, and when one remembers that the French invasion was in 1806, even a glance shows that it rounds off an epoch of which hardly a memory remains. The way to acquire knowledge and culture which we had developed and widened during the long years of peace in the North was forcibly cut off. Since then youths and children have had to develop in a different way, and in this era of tumult there was of course some distorted growth too. So this 'Correspondence' witnesses all the more purely to an epoch that is past and will never come again. Yet its influence lasts on into the present and obviously it is still powerfully alive, not only in Germany. Let us be glad of our part in it, glad to be just what we were then, and that our friendship has endured too. Once more then: May next year be another good one for us . . .

509 To BOISSERÉE

*Weimar,
4th April 1825.*

It was a great pleasure, my good Boisserée, to get your dear letter

* With the medal of Goethe by Bovy.

of 28th March. As so much on this earth passes away, we must hold fast what endures, and I count your friendship among the chief of these enduring things.

The unfortunate fire [at the theatre] came at a time when I felt at ease in body and mind, so I suffered less from the results. And everyone agrees so closely over the rebuilding plans that there is no fear of any unpleasantness in the course of this matter . . .

In the meantime I must make yet another application for the sympathetic interest of my friends. My hope of procuring a privilege of copyright for my works from all the states of the German Confederation obliges me afresh to see that the edition is worthy of this. I have been busy for some years now preparing it and this really amounts to producing a more or less stereotype copy which will then have to remain unaltered. A small society is being formed under my guidance during my lifetime and later under the direction of my son. This society will provide a corrected text, grammatically accurate, and this work has already begun with the revision of several volumes. The documents on which it will be based, both now and later, have been arranged, and the young men who have catalogued them are familiar with them. So everything now is surely plain and safe . . .

My very dear friend, I should like you to know it is your orderly way of working that has been and is my model in this undertaking. For it is quite right that the younger man should set a good example to the older one.

510 To ZELTER

Weimar,
21st May 1825.

. . . Herr Mendelssohn stayed far too short a time here on his way back [from Paris]. Felix amazed everyone with his new Quartet [which he had dedicated to me], and this personal and audible tribute delighted me. I had only a word or two with his father for the large gathering and the music prevented it and occupied me. I should very much have liked to hear from him about Paris. Felix told the ladies about the musical life there, so characteristic of the present time. Greetings to all that family and see that I am remembered there too.

I must also let you know that this seems a good moment for the new edition of my works. I am busy arranging the 'Annals' of my

life; much of the material lies before me, some just prepared only and some in finished form. And there I find our relationship from 1800 onwards running through everything. I should like to let it appear as a lasting memorial, and show how it has been constantly deepening. This can only be proved through the fullest detail; so I am studying your letters, neatly arranged here before me. And I want to ask you to lend me mine to you in five-yearly batches; I would keep them only a short time. I am busy at present on the period between the turn of the century and Schiller's death. If you have the letters arranged already, send them at once; you shall have them back soon. And as I go on, I will ask for the others. I want to spin the whole length of this noble thread out gently and carefully. It is worth the trouble, and really it is no trouble at all, in fact most gratifying. I am already looking forward to see filled up the great gap from the beginning of the century till now.

Another thing: one often wants to keep this sort of document to oneself—a feeling I cannot blame. So no copy of the letters will be made without your express permission; any passages I use will be marked in pencil in the margin.

Farewell. I am looking forward to this re-living of the past; it will make the present all the richer.

511 To Frau OTTILIE VON GOETHE*

Weimar,
1st June 1825.

I am sure you will have liked my recent parcel, full of poetic, laconic and patriotic things; for you are sure to approve of the [Greek] heroes of the Liberation not disdaining fond little jokes now and again . . .

Wolfgang is merry and very good, and when he is with me he coughs very seldom. He is always full of spirits and eagerness at breakfast, pestering me for paper and pencil, making lines and scribbling. Then he folds the letters and wants wafers to seal them and after he has scribbled something for the address he's happy again.

A word now about your precious English literature. Lord Gower's translation [of my 'Faust'] is really a complete transformation. There is hardly anything left of the original; he was obliged to omit a great deal because he could not make it fit into his own conception.

* In Jena where she had gone with her elder boy who had whooping cough; Wolfgang, the younger one, was just recovering from it.

The earlier translation of which we have only the beginning is a much better one. The translator understands the text well and sticks honestly to it, not worrying himself unduly about rhythm and rhymes . . .

512 To ZELTER

Weimar,
6th June 1825.

. . . Everything nowadays, my dear Zelter, is *ultra*. Everybody keeps surpassing himself, in thinking as well as in action. People do not know themselves any more, they do not understand the element they live and move in, nor the material they handle. There certainly is no pure simplicity, though there is simpleness enough.

Young people are stirred up far too soon and then whirled along with the times. Wealth and speed are what the world admires, and what all are bent on. Railways, express mail-coaches, steamboats and every possible means of communication—that's what the civilised people of to-day strive for; so they grow over-civilised, but never get beyond mediocrity. And the general result is that a middling culture becomes universal; that is the aim of the Bible Societies, Lancastrian Method and the rest.

This is the century, in fact, for men of ability, quick, practical understanding, whose skill gives them a feeling of superiority to the masses, even though they themselves have no gift for higher things. Let us keep as far as possible the views we had at the century's beginning; we may be the last representatives—with a few others perhaps—of an era that will not easily come again.

513 To Frau AMALIE VON LEVETZOV

Weimar,
17th June 1825.

You once made the charming remark, my dear friend, that you could not picture Marienbad without me, and you can be sure that now I find I cannot picture myself without Marienbad. I cannot stay in the house on these beautiful June days, and once out of doors, I want to be over the hills and far away—and I know over what hills too.

To think of those dear, slender figures dancing about on the terrace or walking up and down it—and me not there to witness the one or join in the other!

All my friends wish me out of Weimar at present, for they can see I lack something I ought to be seeking elsewhere. The doctors come and give the same advice. You can imagine how restless and impatient I am growing.

You can't quite count on my not coming; for even if I could only come to stay a few days, they would be very special days for me, linked up, I hope, with the happy ones we spent at the 'Golden Ostrich'. On my side everything would be as it was; and who does not hope to have his feelings returned?

But I cannot refuse and can hardly delegate the duties that crowd daily in on me and hinder me. I am besieged by a good many important demands, in my public and in my private life, both customary and unexpected ones. And besides we must all keep in mind our gracious and honoured Prince's [fifty-years'] jubilee on 3rd September. The few weeks till then—how easily and quickly they will go! So here I am, torn between wishes and hopes, between what has to be and what happens to be; I find it hard to come to any decision and yet I cannot definitely resign myself either.

I do hope, though, that you often think of me, and that if I came, everything would be like that time in Carlsbad. And then I might see the Scottish checked dresses again, I hope, and all the other known and loved things that would remind me of Ellbogen, Engelhaus, Aich and the Hammer.

Please give my kindest regards to any former guests now with you again . . . especially to Count St. Leu, if his confidence in the cure has led him back to Marienbad.

I hope Count Klebelsberg and your dear parents have some kindly remembrance of me.

When your dear eldest daughter got the picture which reached you in Strassburg, she surely felt some special claim to it. May your second daughter regain her high spirits and the youngest delight and brighten those around her as she grows in artless charm.

I must stop here, though there is still a great deal I could say; I hope you will say it in loving conversation among yourselves.

514 To FELIX MENDELSSOHN

Weimar,
18th June 1825.

My very dear Felix, you have given me very great pleasure with the valuable gift [of your Quartet in B minor, dedicated to me].

Though I knew it was coming, still it was a surprise. The printing of the music, the title-page and the truly magnificent binding all vied with one another to make your gift splendidly perfect. I shall regard it as a well grown body; you have already made me acquainted with its beautiful, deeply powerful soul and filled me with the profoundest admiration. Here, then, are my warmest thanks. May I hope too that you will soon come and give me another opportunity to admire your amazing performances. My respects to your good parents, your equally gifted sister and your excellent master. I should like to think my memory lives on for ever in a circle like yours.

515 To DÖBEREINER*

Weimar,
18th July 1825.

Dear Sir, I have been instructed to address the following enquiry to you. His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence has passed on to *Serenissimo* an account which states that it is impossible for steam-boats to make long sea journeys, because the paddles moving continuously or for a considerable time in salt or salty water would catch fire.

The question arises whether anything analogous is known from experiments in physics or chemistry. Anything, that is, that would justify this deduction. I should be grateful if you would send me your view.

516 To COUNTESS CAROLINE EGGLOFFSTEIN†

21st July 1825.

My dear friend, Countess Line, would do me the greatest favour by letting me know as soon as possible the barometer-readings in St. Petersburg, just since February. And I should be even more obliged, if I might also have the same months' readings in Moscow and wherever else in that great Empire they have been taken.

You are sure to find all this collected by the Academy of Science, and my dear friend's connections are certain to extend to that learned society. But your faithful heart must find it amusing that I should ask you, who are so constant, for information about the most volatile of substances . . .

* Professor of Chemistry in Jena.

† In St. Petersburg.

My most earnest wish would be fulfilled if I could wait upon your Royal Highness on one of these beautiful evenings we are enjoying. But I seem to grow less and less inclined to stir. I was, however, at Belvedere yesterday evening and saw the most attractive plants there, those now growing and also reproductions of former interesting ones. The prolonged dry spell is most welcome to me, but it makes all the plants look sadder than they should. Those that have been tended and watered, however, stand very healthy and flourishing.

(2) I was very pleased to get Daniell's work. I entirely endorse what he writes at the beginning of the Preface, where he says that the science of meteorology is one of such extent that its phenomena are probably best studied in detached sections or monographs. I too, for instance, am concerning myself with the barometric evidence only, waiting and hoping for others, like Daniell, to treat other aspects in the same way. He has devoted his attention to the vapours and gases in the atmosphere. I shall send a few friendly words to him in your Royal Highness's name once I learn from Döbereiner what he thinks of the instrument. Should its inventor and constructor hear that it is broken, he will probably despatch another, more securely if not so bulkily packed.

If your Royal Highness should find that the observations recorded on the weather in Antwerp for the past half year are to be obtained, these would be of paramount importance at the present time.

(3) Nees von Esenbeck has sent the new volumes of the Records of the Leopoldine Society.† Their outlay on this work is tremendous and the support they receive from the Government must be very great if they wish to continue in this style, for it is hardly conceivable that there can be any corresponding sale. One must, however, acknowledge that this work is and remains of great value.

(4) Hofrat Soret has sent me a consignment of mineral specimens from the Thüringer Wald—a very pleasant reminder of the times when I clambered about in these regions myself, tapping in search of knowledge. All kinds of memories awoke in me at the sight of these new samples.

I see we shall have a heavy thunderstorm this evening and hope every single plant will be refreshed.

* In Wilhelmsthal.

† In Vienna.

Earnestly commending myself, therefore, to the continued grace and favour of my Sovereign Highnesses,

I have the honour to sign myself,
their most obedient servant.

518 To BOISSERÉE *

Weimar,
14th September 1825.

For the last fortnight we have been living in a town gay with decorations, celebrating the rarest of events, [the fifty years' jubilee of our Grand Duke and his golden wedding]. People in every station of life, from Weimar and elsewhere, men and women, are enjoying taking part in it, and it is still going on. The children wave little flags and shout for joy, the young people go off in couples every day to dance, the older men look on gravely and happily, and anyone who can look back over the last fifty years on the spot has a strange feeling indeed.

It was a very great pleasure to me these last few days to celebrate at the same time the restoration of my former valued relationship [with Cotta] and the conclusion, through your help, of so important an affair. Affection, love, friendship and trust, whenever we meet with them on earth, appear splendid and transfigured, and even the weary wanderer feels refreshed and filled with new life.

I have sent Herr von Cotta an answer with my grateful acknowledgements. Once I have summoned my ideas a little, I shall write to you again. Meanwhile the enclosed lines will show that we can now feel perfectly safe, and can begin our work cheerfully and with confidence . . .

ENCLOSURE:

EXTRACT OF LETTER FROM PRINCE METTERNICH, VIENNA

6th September 1825.

'His Majesty the Emperor has granted your Excellency etc. the privilege of copyright in connection with the new complete edition of your Excellency's works; this copyright is valid not only for all the provinces within the Austrian Monarchy which belong to the German Confederation, but also, as an exceptional favour, is made applicable to the whole extent of that Monarchy.'

* He acted as intermediary between Goethe and his publisher Cotta.

*Weimar,
4th December 1825.*

It did my heart good to hear your voice, so friendly, so welcome, and yet unexpected, recalling me to the best days of my life. It reminded me of the times when every step I took was guided by one whose understanding friendship alone made it possible for me to continue my very varied life without serious difficulty. The wise guidance and help of this most experienced and kindly man removed every obstacle from my path. My sincerest thanks, then, for your thoughtful words, showing me in so kind a way that the memory of the past is as vivid in you as it is in me. My inmost feelings as well as outward circumstances so often remind me of him whose presence brought me comfort and joy whenever I sought help.

May you find this memory, as I do, as comforting as it is sacred, and may our kinship of mind and heart, with such a sure foundation, live on within us for ever unaltered.

* Widow of Goethe's colleague and friend, Privy Councillor Voigt, who had sent congratulations for Goethe's jubilee, 7th November.

1826-1830

Noch ist es Tag, da rühre sich der Mann;
Es kommt die Nacht, wo niemand wirken kann.

West-östlicher Divan,
Buch der Sprüche

It still is day, the time to be active; for the night cometh
when no man can work.

West-Eastern Divan,
Book of Proverbs

THE festivities for Goethe's jubilee were soon followed by sad events. Many of Goethe's contemporaries died long before him; the few years that still were his took from him two of those who were dearest to him: Frau von Stein early in 1827 at the age of eighty-five. In order not to distress her old friend she had arranged in her will for her funeral procession not to pass in front of Goethe's house on the Frauenplan. On 14th June 1828 Carl August died rather unexpectedly. Goethe himself became more and more conscious of the approach of his own end and most of his work now consisted in an endeavour to complete what he had on hand. He succeeded in finishing the *Helena* and part of *Faust* in 1826, and worked more consistently than he had done for many a year on the rest of Part II of *Faust*. He wrote some more short stories to round off *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* and he also published various essays on German, French, English, Italian, Serbian, Bohemian and Chinese literature, on Scott's *History of Napoleon* and *Über Mathematik und deren Missbrauch*; some new lyric poems too belong to this late period. Goethe also gave great care to his collections which were almost as varied as his interests: collections of prints and etchings, fossils, coins, majolica, autographs, minerals and of the portraits he had made of all important visitors who came to see him. Nor did he neglect his correspondence; on the long list of recipients new names appear every year, as now for example Varnhagen von Ense of the circle of Romantic poets in Berlin and Sir Walter Scott.

Weimar,
18th January 1826.

My dear Sir, your important essay [on crystallography] reached me at an opportune moment, and I read and re-read it up to page 45 at once and with great pleasure. That brought me, however, to the limits God and nature have set to my understanding. I have to rely exclusively on word, language and image, and am quite unable to work in any way with signs and numbers which very gifted minds can so easily understand.

Let me add one wish to my warm thanks for that part of your work that I could grasp. I hope that you will now bring crystallography nearer to the needs of German students, so that those young men who have time to master only the main principles of natural history, instead of being deterred, may grasp the essentials of the subject. They can later build on these according to their talents and inclinations.

The sciences, as they are at present, are clearly growing more and more inaccessible to the amateur. Their field has widened so much that now only experts can enjoy themselves, or else argue, there. But the time has surely come for what has widened to narrow again, and for the auxiliary sciences all to refer to some central point and really be auxiliaries . . .

Science has every reason to rate the quantitative as high or higher than the qualitative. We must, however, not forget that when we talk of teaching, the advantage lies with the teacher who for practical purposes can stress the qualitative aspect when he is dealing with youth, which is relying on its senses. This would of course be an exoteric theory and would seem all the sounder and more brilliant, if it revealed glimpses of a well-founded esoteric one, acting as a stable background and a foil to set it off.

What I have written, Sir, will I hope give proof of the confidence with which your all-too-short stay here has filled me and which this work of yours has increased. As long as I am alive and active, I hope you will continue your confidence in me, and always let me share, as far as I can, in your thorough work.

I should be glad to be able to discuss this important topic with you at some later date.

* Lecturer in mineralogy in Leipzig.

. . . I have heard a great deal about this improvisator, indeed I tried him out myself. His is a very agreeable talent, finally made possible now that our language, its rhythms and rhymes, are sufficiently refined, and his example will soon be copied. Up till now he has limited himself to subjective modern poetry, so self-concerned and self-absorbed. He does very well with anything confined to inner experience, feeling, disposition and reflections on these; and he will deal successfully with any theme where they are treated. But he has not yet developed his powers in connection with anything really objective. Like all young men nowadays, he rather fights shy of reality, although everything imaginative must be based on reality, just as every ideal must come back to it. The theme I set this young man was to describe Hamburg, as if he had just returned to it. The thread of ideas he followed from the start was the sentimental one of his mother, his friends there, their love, patience and help. The Elbe remained a stream of silver, the anchorage and the town counted for nothing, he did not even mention the swarming crowds—one might as easily have been revisiting Naumburg or Merseburg. I told him all this quite candidly; he could do something really good, if he could give a panorama of a great northern trading-city as well as his feelings for his home and his family.

But this is just what our younger contemporaries find difficult, indeed impossible, this change of heart and mind from the limitations of what lies within us to the boundlessness of what lies without, from what is simple and born with us to what surrounds us in so many forms . . .

It was with great pleasure, my dear Sir, that I received your second communication about Byron's monument. In the enclosed note I have accepted the distinguished Committee's suggestion, and I beg that you, Sir, will subscribe the sum of £20 in my name. I am glad to take every opportunity of showing my esteem for one whose genius all too soon spent and used up the most remarkable personality anyone could have.

* In Göttingen.

I treasure the dedication to 'Sardanapalus' very highly indeed . . .

523 To Frau VON STEIN*

*Weimar,
29th August 1826.*

The enclosed poem ought, my dearest, to end:

'But to see the affection and love of those linked as immediate neighbours lasting through so many seasons, is the very highest that can be granted to man.'

And so on for ever and ever!

Weimar the 29th August 1826.

GOETHE.

524 To CARL AUGUST†

*Weimar,
13th September 1826.*

This tiresome gadfly has been tormenting me for years now—she is a relic handed down from my good Mother. Now she is playing the same game that perhaps made her attractive in her youth, talking about nightingales and chirping like a finch. If your Royal Highness so orders it, I shall talk to her seriously like an uncle, and forbid her to trouble you any further. Otherwise you will never be safe from being molested like this—both now and later.

525 To S. BOISSERÉE

*Weimar,
22nd October 1826.*

. . . God and His Nature have given me so many years that I can best express my grateful acknowledgement by being as active as ever. I should like to show myself worthy of my good fortune, as long as it may last, and I spend my days and nights in thinking and acting in any way that can make this possible.

Day and night is not just a manner of speaking, for at my age I am often sleepless and I do not waste these hours of darkness in vague generalising; I use them to consider what I should do the next day, and then when morning comes, I set to work honestly and get on with it as well as I can. In this way I probably do more and use this allotted time sensibly to finish off what I neglected to do

* With the little poem *To my Friends*, dated 28th August 1826, Goethe's seventy-seventh birthday.

† About Bettina Brentano.

when I could reasonably expect a 'still-to-morrow' and an 'always-to-morrow'.

'Helena' is one of my oldest conceptions, as old as that of 'Faust' itself, and though I have changed its form again and again, the idea has always been the same. I showed Schiller as much of it as I had done at the beginning of the century; our correspondence tells how he kept encouraging me to go on with it. I did so; but nothing but the fullness of time could round off this work that now covers a good three thousand years from the Sack of Troy to the destruction of Missolonghi. The whole thing is a kind of phantasmagoria, of course, but with real unity of place and action.

That is enough about it. Is it not perhaps worse than if I had said nothing? Whatever value is to be put on the work, I have never written anything like it, so it can count as the very latest.

Re-reading what I have written here, I wonder if I ought to send it off. One ought not to talk, really, about what one means to do or is doing or has done already. To do so involves certain unavoidable disadvantages. I wish we two lived nearer to each other. Then we could go on discussing such matters more freely and fully . . .

526 To SIR WALTER SCOTT

Weimar,
12th January 1827.

Mr Henderson, the art publisher, favourably known to me by his work, has sent me a presumably good likeness of Lord Byron, who died so much too soon. This renews the grief I was bound to feel at this loss which struck the world in general and myself more especially. For some things he said led me to flatter myself that I had won the affection of this man who is so universally esteemed.

Those who outlived him can best comfort themselves by looking round and seeing that they do not stand alone—he did not stand alone either, for love, friendship and trust had drawn many a good man to him—thus they now are conscious of a spiritual bond with many worthy people attached to him, and feel that their most important inheritance is this kinship with them.

Mr Henderson tells me of his intention to return to Edinburgh. I am glad of this occasion to carry out a project I have long had in mind, to express to you, Sir, the keen interest I have taken throughout many years in your admirable descriptions. And there is no lack of outward stimulus too to think of you; not only are translations

of your most richly furnished works known here, but the originals too are known and appreciated as their true merit deserves.

I recall, too, most distinguished Sir, that in the past you made a thorough study of my life and my work, and, if I am not mistaken, even called upon your fellow-countrymen to share that interest. At my present advanced age I can no longer delay my thanks. I must rather make haste to express them on this occasion, especially as I am thus enabled to voice the wish for your continued friendly regard and a direct request for your sympathetic interest in future.

527 To A. F. C. STRECKFUSS

Weimar,

23rd (27th) January 1827.

Dear Sir, [the samples of your translation of Manzoni's 'Adelchi'] have given me great pleasure; I am convinced that a world-literature is in process of formation, that all nations are in favour of it and are taking steps towards it. Germans can and should be most active in this respect; they have a fine part to play in this magnificent mutual approach.

We have no need to encourage the English springtide, but just to wait and see the result of its inundations. But wherever possible we must quietly introduce the French and the Italians, as their works, though they have merit, do not quite appeal to German taste and outlook.

My best thanks, then, for your translation of 'Adelchi'. I am very well aware that with this poet especially one must love him if one is to enter fully into his writings. I find it impossible, alas, to concentrate on them at the present time, and to amplify duly and round off what I wrote in 'Kunst und Altertum'. So here are just a few words on your work.

You are very wise not to keep strictly to the rhythm of the original choruses. Everything depends on the main idea, the order of the words and the sound of the verse; we must not lose sight or sound of these.

You are quite right in remarking that the verse when spoken sounds just like a recitative. It is particularly noticeable that the most important words always come at the beginning of the lines, and that makes for a continuous enjambement, favourable to this kind of declamation. You have often retained this, but it was right not to insist upon it; it does not suit our German ear and thought.

I do not want to recommend this device, but if I were still writing for the stage, I should treat important passages in this way. I made a careful translation of Svarto's monologue, by way of practice. This passage being particularly suited to recitative, I sent it to Zelter, asking him to set it to music. He wishes you well and would be pleased to help you on with your work; so get him to do this and to play it over to you.

I am convinced that any really proficient actor has only to speak this monologue, even without thinking of music, and it will sound as if it had been set to music, and on the stage would be certain to have the profoundest effect, though the audience might not know why.

This is one of the fancies that I would carry out if I still had any connection with the theatre. It is the sort of thing that made my twenty years direction of it tolerable, in fact a joy to me . . .

And now let me mention a long-standing scruple of mine about a passage in the original. There is one generally accepted stipulation about any narration, especially of a descriptive kind, on which I insist most strongly. The elements portrayed must be fitted together and developed through all their stages in the strictest sequence, so clearly and sharply that the hearer or reader is obliged to think in one particular way alone. In 'Adelchi' the priest's description of the strange Alpine path begins well and aptly, but when he reaches the highest peaks, with their towering, unsurmountable masses of ice and snow, and then begins to speak of a mountain raising its head above all others, his description acts like a *fata morgana*, leading one's imagination astray. This mountain with its green slopes would seem to be hovering in the air above the glaciers. The error lies in the one line

'that raised its head above the others'.

This can of course mean 'above others round it', but it sounds as though it refers to these ice-covered peaks. And altogether this holy man has made us climb so painfully and so long that he might take a little time to come down with us to lower ground. I would boldly alter the passage slightly . . .

It may be that the translator ought not to take a liberty like this. But if he has really understood his author, he will be able to evoke in his own mind not only what the author has done, but also what he wanted and ought to have done. That at least is the line I have always taken in translation, though I make no claim that it is justifiable.

I hope you will be indulgent about all this . . .

Weimar,
19th March 1827.

What can one friend say to another at such a moment? A disaster like this bound us in closest friendship which could not have been more affectionate and the present misfortune leaves us as we are; that means a good deal already.

The Fates are never weary of repeating the old tale of the night that falls a thousand, thousand times and yet once more. To live long is to outlive many; this is the tedious *refrain* of the rambling *vaudeville* that is our life; it comes again and again, irritates, and yet drives us on each time to another serious effort.

The circle of my acquaintances reminds me of the Sibylline Books; the flames of life burn them up one after another and each, as it vanishes in the air, adds to the value of those that are left. Let us go on striving until the Eternal calls us one after the other back into space. Then may He, Himself always alive, not deny us new tasks like those we have known already here on earth. And if His fatherly kindness should add memory of what was good and right in our endeavours and actions here, we would be all the more ready to grasp—and join in turning—the wheels of the world's busy mechanism.

The *entelechiid Monad*,† must keep continually active; if this becomes second nature to it, it never can lack occupation.

Forgive these abstruse expressions! . . .

I am glad that in the midst of your sorrow you thought of the last number of 'Kunst und Altertum'. Even in our deepest loss we must look round for what still remains for us to preserve and accomplish . . .

Farewell. Don't forget you have my true sympathy in good times and in bad. Sit down and write to me often; I will always have leisure enough for answering and sending you something . . .

A word or two now about the proofs of 'Kunst und Altertum', with just a general recommendation. You will certainly welcome Hamlet's father appearing in the Queen's room in a dressing-gown and not in armour . . .

Fourteen printed sheets of my Fourth Volume are here before me already; with the next instalment comes my 'Helena'; it will be strange for me to see this fifty-year-old ghost in print at last . . .

* Whose last son had died suddenly, leaving a young wife and a baby son.

† The monad that achieves its purpose.

Weimar,
23rd-27th March 1827.

. . . Your recommendation of the most recommendable Krüger coincided happily with one to our Grand Duke. Last night he had a great success as Mortimer [in Schiller's 'Maria Stuart']; my children and friends praised his performance most sensibly. I asked him to dinner to-day where these theatre-lovers were very gay and charming; they must have made a delightful impression on him. He is to be Orestes in my 'Iphigenie' on Wednesday, but I cannot be there as he hoped I would. What can the memory of those days mean to me now, when I felt, thought and wrote all that?

I had to suffer something of the same sort, though, lately. [Charles de Voeux], an Englishman (who like others had come to Germany in order *not* to learn German) was carried away by the stimulus of our conversation here and felt inspired to translate my 'Tasso' into English. The first trial passages were not bad, it got better as he went on, though not without help of our domestic 'circle for language and literature' that revolves on and on like a perpetual screw.

He hoped I would be willing to read his whole translation and, so that I could do so, he had his effort very handsomely printed in Crown Octavo and with fresh type. I found myself committed to going seriously and carefully through this strange work; I had not read it since it was printed and had only listened to it in snatches in the theatre. And to my astonishment I realised afresh what I had then wanted and accomplished. And I understood how young people can find pleasure and comfort when they hear in well-framed language that others too have been tormented as they now are. The translation is remarkable; the little that was misunderstood has been altered at my suggestion; the expression grows more fluent, the last acts and the impassioned passages are particularly fine.

Now your letter of the 23rd too has reached me, my good Zelter; let me tell you once again what a pleasure it is to correspond with you. I find you always pick out a vital point and enlarge on it with profound understanding and to good purpose. And it makes me all the more pleased with the grain of wheat which I found and which you then brought to good harvest. *The perfection of the work of art in itself* is what we always must demand of it! And to imagine that Aristotle, who had the most perfect examples before him, could have thought of its influence [on the characters of the audience]! What a pity! . . .

*Weimar,
In the Garden,
20th May 1827.*

Thomas Carlyle of Edinburgh has published 'German Romance', a collection in four octavo volumes of all kinds of prose tales in novel-form. He is the translator of 'Wilhelm Meister' and in 1823 wrote a life of Schiller. I am anxious to learn what is known of his circumstances and his studies, and also what the journals, English and German, have to say about him. He is in every way a most interesting man.

You will be welcome if you will spend some time with me one evening. There is a good deal I would like to tell you and discuss with you.

*Weimar,
24th May 1827.*

Be it known to my dearest friend by these presents that on Saturday, 12th May, I drove quite innocently to my garden down here, without a thought beyond spending a pleasant hour in it. But I liked it there so much, the spring countryside was so perfect that I stayed on without meaning to do so. And to-day, Ascension Day, I am still here, very busy this last little while with something I hope will be a pleasure to others besides myself. The Second Part of 'Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre' is finished; only a few long grasses are needed now to bind this whole bunch of flowers together, and that could be done—and better—by anyone of intelligence grasping and taking up the detail.

And now let me tell you in confidence that helpful good spirits have led me back to 'Faust' just where descending from the cloud [that brought him from ancient Greece] he meets his evil genius once more. Don't tell anyone about this; but I should like you to know that I think I shall go forward boldly from this point and fill in the gap between it and the ending that has been ready for a long time . . .

Now I must close asking you to recommend the accompanying list to your good Doris's kindness. I am without a great many essentials in that impromptu student-household of my own down here . . .

9th June 1827.

... The English have introduced their living poets to us; two stout volumes give fair samples of their work with biographical notes. I have been studying this work hard for some time: it leads one to the most interesting comparisons. The decided merits of all these poets derive from their origin and situation: even the least of them has Shakespeare for his ancestor and the ocean at his feet. And now I want to tell you some of the pleasant things that happened during my four-weeks' stay in my garden. The weather certainly helped not a little. And I also enclose a translation of an old Scottish song, that I think keeps its dour, sturdy character*. . .

Weimar,
20th July 1827.

I hope you received in due course the letter I despatched by the post on 15th May, expressing my very great pleasure at what you sent me. It reached me in the country where I had more leisure to study and enjoy it. And now I am in a position to send you a parcel in return, with the hope that you will be kind enough to accord it a welcome.

Let me begin, my dear Sir, with high praise for your 'Life of Schiller'. It is a remarkable work, showing an intensive study of the events of his life as well as of his works, and a genuine interest in them. It is remarkable how this has brought you to a real insight into Schiller's character and his very great merit; one could hardly have expected so clear and just an estimate to be formed at such a distance . . .

And let me praise in their own way your notes on the lives of Musaeüs, Hoffmann, Richter, etc., that preface 'German Romance'. They are carefully and concisely written and give sufficient information, indicating the individual character of these authors and how it influenced their writings.

You consistently show a calm, clear interest, my dear Sir, in these attempts of the poetic literature in Germany. You enter into that nation's particular endeavours, giving each individual writer his place and his due.

I hope I may venture to add some general observations which I have long had in mind and which this work has now brought back again.

* *Gutmann und Gutweib*, a ballad.

It is clear that for some time past the best poets and writers of literary works of all nations have aimed at what is common to all men. In all that is particular, whether historical, mythological, legendary or more or less arbitrarily invented, we see this universal quality shining and glowing through national and personal characteristics.

This same quality is present, too, in ordinary life, permeating and imparting some degree of gentleness to what is coarse, savage, cruel, false, selfish or crafty here on earth. One can hardly hope that this will lead to universal peace; it may, however, make the inevitable conflict grow gradually less acute, war less cruel and victory less insolent.

Whatever hints or aims at this in the literature of any country, ought to be taken over by the others . . .

Forgive these observations, my dear Sir, they are neither very coherent nor very comprehensible. They are taken from the ocean of reflections that rises with the years in the mind of any thoughtful person. And let me add something I wrote for another occasion, but which applies in the main directly to your undertaking.

The surest way to reach a truly universal tolerance is to accept whatever is peculiar to the individual or the group, while remembering that what has real merit is characterised by its being common to all mankind. Germans have been contributing for a long time to this kind of appreciation and mutual recognition.

Understanding and study of the German language bring a man to the market where the nations all offer their wares; he acts as an interpreter and grows richer himself.

It is the business of every translator, then, to be an active agent in this universal intellectual commerce, and to help the exchange of these goods. Whatever one may say about the inadequacy of translation, it remains one of the most important and praiseworthy activities in the general traffic among nations.

The Koran says: 'God has given to every people a prophet in their own tongue.' Every translator is a kind of prophet to his own people. Luther's translation of the Bible had an immense influence, although critics still dispute about it and find fault with it. And the whole vast machinery of the Bible Society aims simply at preaching the Gospel to every people in their own tongue.

Let me stop at this point, where one might go on for ever. Do give me the pleasure of a reply soon, letting me know that my parcel has reached you.

And now, to close, may I send my best respects to your dear wife; I have great pleasure in enclosing a few trifles for her, in return for her charming gift. May you live to enjoy many years of happiness together.

Even after all this I feel I must add a word or two; I hope Mr Carlyle will take what I have written here in good part and read it till it becomes a kind of conversation, giving him the feeling that we are meeting face to face.

And I must thank him, too, for the trouble he has taken over my own works, for the goodness and kindness with which he speaks of my character and the events of my life. This gives me confidence to look forward to his future acquaintance with other works of mine. And especially once my 'Correspondence with Schiller' is published, I hope he will not alter his opinion of my friend or of me, but that many details will serve to strengthen it.

534 To C. G. CARUS*

Weimar,
16th August 1827.

We are indeed fortunate if we can apply the old saying to ourselves 'What we wish for in youth, old age gives us in plenty'. This happy fate has been mine in many fields and especially in this one in which you, Sir, are distinguishing yourself so highly.

It is very pleasant to me to recall the eighties when I was so keenly interested in comparative anatomy and convinced that this kind of study alone showed the way towards some understanding of life, indeed of nature in all its forms. There was the momentous work of Camper with whom I was in touch shortly before his death; Sömmering's keen vitality influenced me more, and Merck was my companion in my pursuit of this study too. So I can cheerfully recall my earnest though inadequate attempts and see those former days as clearly as present ones. Afterwards, knowing these researches were in good hands, I gradually ceased to co-operate actively.

However, these studies are a great benefit to me, for whenever it comes to any scientific advance, they both urge and fit me to test it, to appreciate its value and to understand it. And in particular they enable me to gain fresh strength and energy from what you promote and achieve in such a masterly way.

So I am delighted to see the second number [of your explanatory

* Professor of Medicine in Dresden, when he had sent his new book on Anatomy.

diagrams on Comparative Anatomy]. It seems to contain a scientific ointment for the eyes; when I use it, I find I can see more clearly and keenly into the animal world, now that I have had occasion this spring and summer to renew my studies of the unceasing growth and change within the realm of plants.

I must add further that my connections—new or renewed—with Count Sternberg, Cuvier and Sömmering have led me to take up once again the study of prehistoric organisms; and here your theory of primary forms always occupied my thoughts. Understanding it aright means that a quiet, calm contemplation of what comes into being and grows, of all inception and development, becomes constantly easier and a greater joy to me.

If we could discuss these matters together—it would need some time—I should reach an understanding of them I can hardly hope for otherwise. But all this excellent work is being done in any case, even though I myself cannot grasp it fully. With my best wishes for your continued success.

535 To FRAU DREISSIG*

23rd September 1827.

Dear Frau Dreissig, you have given me very great pleasure with the beautiful hydrangea you sent me for my birthday this year. I and many of my friends have been enjoying it all this time, and now that the bloom is over I am sending it back, with renewed thanks, because I should not like to entrust the further care of it to anyone but you. If I am fortunate enough to live to the same season next year, may I ask you to send me it again, to show that you remember me kindly. And in the meantime, accept this medal to remind you of me. I hope you will be able to continue as active as ever in your work, so pleasant and so useful to yourself and others.

536 To A. NICOLOVIUS†

Weimar,
2nd October 1827.

I hope that I shall soon and by degrees be able to thank you properly, my dear nephew, for your unusual undertaking. My friends here are reading this work with great attention and assure

* Widow of a gardener near Weimar.

† Who was bringing out a collection of literary and artistic notes on Goethe by various people.

me you have made an important contribution to German literary criticism by showing the character of the various critics.

But ought you not also at the same time to collect all that has been said against me—if only to add to your own and our friends' knowledge? People have criticised me a good deal, rightly or wrongly and as it is a question of getting to know me and the age we live in, not only the pro but also the contra is needed. You see I have great confidence in you and your keenness. Besides this will be less trouble to you than to anyone else, for you would in any case be going through these works and finding both opinions there . . .

My regards to your father, and do continue in your active friendship.

537 To VARNHAGEN VON ENSE*

Weimar,
8th November 1827.

These old letters of mine to good Wolf, copied by your own hand, my dear Sir, are indeed a handsome gift. They may not be of any great significance, but they show an easy, carefree existence and untroubled mutual trust. Accept, then, my best thanks and count me as one of your debtors.

I should like to add something about the 'Berliner Jahrbücher'. It is undoubtedly one of the great merits of this periodical that the reviewers put their name to their work; this is of the greatest value in particular to me. For as it is impossible for me to keep pace with all the branching-out of literature in its rapid progress, this kind of communication makes known to me the men of importance who are now gaining prominence in the different fields and whose worth and adherence to your circle assures them interest and appreciation. And yet there is one danger in this that is difficult to avoid. One or the other may make some wrong assertion—in his own name of course, but in good and distinguished company—and in this way what is dangerous and harmful may be believed and approved. For instance Purkinje states quite roundly and confidently that the true self-knowledge, so necessary to man, should be studied in hypochondriacs and those suffering from depression and fear of themselves. This is a very risky statement, as nothing is more dangerous than to make weakness the standard. German art has been suffering for thirty years now from tending and cherishing

* In Berlin.

mental weakness and stubbornness, leading to conceit which then made them incorrigible. I am apprehensive of this flattering error, for I see men of promising talent ruined by it.

In expressing myself in this way, I certainly do not refer to your undertaking but solely to the critic. Forgive what I have said; I owe it to my happy, unreserved relationship with you.

But how fortunate must I consider you for being privileged to listen this winter to the voices of Hegel and Humboldt. I hope that the Weimar friends, with their love of quietly assimilating all that is beautiful and good, will find some way unassumingly to take their share too.

My thanks once again and greetings to the dear companion of your life.

Constant in my interest.

538 To KNEBEL

Weimar,
14th November 1827.

It does me real good, my dear friend, to hear that my oldest and noblest contemporaries are taking interest in my 'Helena'. This work, the fruit of many years, seems to me now as amazing as the tall trees in my garden at the Stern. They are younger even than this poem, yet they have grown to an astounding height; they make something real, something of one's own doing appear almost miraculous, incredible . . .

Hegel's presence at the same time as Zelter's stimulated and refreshed me. With Zelter I could discuss in detail our most personal thoughts for we have been living in constant intercourse for so many years. But with Hegel I could not but wish that we might have been together longer; the printed works of a man like this seem in part confused and abstruse as we cannot adapt them directly to our needs. We can do so only in actual conversation where we become aware that in fundamental ideas and outlook we agree and where discussion and mutual explanation can easily bring us closer together.

Besides we fortunately agree in the matter of optics . . .

539 To THOMAS CARLYLE*

Weimar,
15th January 1828.

Should you see Sir Walter Scott, please thank him from me most

* Continuation of a letter despatched by the post on 1st January 1828.

warmly for his kind, cheerful letter; it shows his noble confidence that men care for each other. It is in this spirit too, that I received his 'Life of Napoleon', which I have read through from beginning to end with great attention during these winter evenings and nights. I was most interested to see how the greatest narrator of the century fares at this unusual task and how he passes in quiet order before our eyes the momentous happenings of which we were perforce the witnesses. His chapters group large, distinct masses of facts, and make these complicated occurrences perfectly simple to grasp, and every event is told with a clarity and vividness beyond praise. I read the work in the original, so that it produced its own, true effect. Here we have a patriotic Briton speaking, one who cannot, I suppose, look favourably on what the enemy does, who as an honest citizen wants the demands of moral conduct to be met at the same time as those of politics. He threatens his foe in the full tide of success with the direst consequences, and even in that foe's bitterest ruin can hardly bring himself to pity him.

This work means a great deal to me besides, partly by reminding me of what I had lived through and partly by showing me a good deal I had overlooked. It made me see some things in a new and unexpected light and think again over what I had taken to be settled points. And in particular it fitted me to judge those who criticise this important work—and there are sure to be some who do—and to appreciate the arguments they put forward. So you see the end of last year could not have brought me any gift I prized more. This work has become a kind of golden net for me, and with it I have been fishing in the waters of Lethe and taking up great draughts of shadowy figures from my past life . . .

Books and journals sent by express-mail are now forming a link between the nations and sensible travellers are doing a good deal to help too. Mr Heavyside who came to see you brings the happiest report of you and your circumstances. And now he is sure to give you a picture of our life here in Weimar. As tutor to the young Hopes he spent some happy years to good purpose in our rather limited but in reality talented and lively circle. I hear the Hope family are pleased too with the education the young men were able to receive here. There is much in Weimar to benefit young men, especially those of your nation. They are kindly and indulgently welcomed at the two Courts, of the reigning House and of the Hereditary Prince. They get a good deal of varied enjoyment there and are encouraged to distinguish themselves by their good manners.

Other good society, too, helps to keep them restrained but still cheerful, so that they gradually drop everything rough and awkward. Their intercourse with the beautiful and cultured ladies here provides occupation and food for heart, mind and imagination and holds them back from the dissipation that young people give way to, more because they are bored than because they want to. Weimar is possibly the only place with opportunities for this free service, and we have the pleasure of seeing those who have tried Berlin and Dresden soon coming back to us. Besides, our ladies keep up a lively correspondence between here and Britain, which proves that it is not absolutely necessary to be actually present to keep going any well-established affection, for instance Mr Lawrence has come back from time to time and enjoyed at once taking up the threads of former relations. Mr Parry has rounded off a residence of many years with a suitable marriage.

Please continue your interest in me.

540 To CARL AUGUST

Weimar,
15th May 1828.

Your Royal Highness, though one always likes to transmit what is beautiful and handsome and to share it with others, one is unwilling to present anything that might make an unpleasant impression. That is how I feel about the enclosed portrait. The artist does not lack skill and has been most patient in his attempt to immortalise the memory of his princely patron [the late Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.] But in my view he has had little success. He dedicates this copy to your Royal Highness; it has lain here for some time in my house, but it must now pay its respects, at least as a miracle of the lithographer's art.

The happiest good-wishes of all your faithful subjects accompany your Royal Highness to Berlin. To see [your great-grandson,] the new scion of your noble House and to witness in Berlin artistic and technical progress one might almost characterise as limitless, is all sure to add to your Royal Highness's contentment at your immediate surroundings here too, and at your own continued achievements.

What is most outstanding in Berlin will naturally attract your notice; but permit me to draw your attention to the work being carried out in granite under the building-inspector and town-councillor Cantian. There is a big granite basin, I am told it is 22 ft.

in diameter and is for the new Museum. It is made from a single piece of granite taken from the great block called The *Markgraf* Stone near Fürstenwald; the enclosed piece will show what a valuable and dignified object this is. There are columns for the Museum too and other things made from blocks found in Brandenburg. Your Royal Highness might perhaps care to order a few granite table-tops which always look so decorative in princely residences. This too is an activity of the Berlin Technological Institute, which does wonders under its Director, *Regierungsrat* Beuth.

541 To THOMAS CARLYLE*

Weimar,
15th June 1828.

Your interesting letter of the 18th April reached me in due course and found me busy with a great many things . . .

Captain Skinner is back here again with many good and friendly words about you and about how you are living. Of course we have now to think of you somewhere different, in a place as yet rather undefined, until some passing friend brings you nearer to us again by a more precise description.

I have here four numbers of your two periodicals, dealing with foreign literature, and I must say once more that I think no nation has studied another so closely, no nation has interested itself so greatly in another as the Scottish in the German at the present time . . .

Here is a letter for you from my good Eckermann, with whom, as I said, I should like to put you in touch. He will be glad to reply to your enquiries and can tell you about the latest literary works here that may be of use to you.

Weimar, 15th June 1828.

I was finishing this when, alas, the sudden sad news came of the death of our most excellent Sovereign, the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. He died on the 14th June near Torgau, on his way back from Berlin.

I am sending this off directly; later, with the books, other observations will follow.

Best greetings to your dear wife from myself and Otilie; we hope to hear you have settled into your new home.

* At Craigenputtock, Dumfriesshire.

Weimar,
17th June 1828.

Just a few heartfelt words to thank you most warmly for both letter and account. The whole event is so distressing, and yet hearing the details comforts us.

Convey my most sincere respects to the Grand Duchess. My sentiments need no words, and for what I feel I can find none. If I felt able to venture it, I should be in Wilhelmsthal by now.

Do continue your daily report; it calms me. We are trying to get back to the usual ways here as far as possible, seeing to several details that may be of use generally.

Farewell; rest assured that I am most grateful for your sympathetic attention. I have had a copy of your kind letter sent at once to [Otilie in] Carlsbad, to inform and comfort those there.

Ever yours, and now nearer to you through this sorrow.

Weimar,
28th June 1828.

All through these last sad days I have been searching for words to use to address your Royal Highness most respectfully, though from a distance. But where could I find the right expression for all the varied grief that oppresses me? And how should I venture to speak the sympathy to which your Royal Highness's present state invites me?

At this moment I can only send the most faithful assurance of my undying respect and devotion to your Royal Highness, trusting that this will in some measure suffice to excuse an omission which I have so far vainly endeavoured to make good . . .

Weimar,
5th July 1828.

Nothing is more natural in a time of sadness and distress than to look towards old, tried friends. So you will take it kindly if I invite myself for Monday midday, to remember the Departed in the quietest family circle.

* He was staying at Wilhelmsthal with the widowed Grand Duchess and the young Hereditary Prince whose tutor he was.

*Dornburg,
10th July 1828.*

I have been so painfully distressed in my mind that I have been forced at least to take care of my health. So I have come to Dornburg to avoid the sad solemnities. It is fit and right that they should be used as a symbol to the general public of their great loss which on this occasion they sincerely feel.

I cannot remember if you know Dornburg. It is a small hillside town, down the Saale valley from Jena. Country seats, large and small, have been built outside it, strung out along the steep limestone ridge. There are charming gardens belonging to the small country houses. I am staying at the last of these to the south, [the Grand Duke's], a dear old place recently freshened up. The views are splendid and cheerful, the flowers in the well-kept gardens are in full bloom, the vines are loaded with grapes, and below my window I see a flourishing vineyard; the late Grand Duke had it planted three years ago on the most barren slope and had the pleasure of enjoying its fresh green last Whitsun. On the other side the rose-arbours are a miracle of blooms, and the hollyhocks and all the rest are blossoming in every shade. I see it all with the colours intensified like a rainbow on a dark grey background.

For fifty years I have been spending days of happiness here with him from time to time, and to-day there is no place I could stay in where what he has done shows itself more obvious and delightful. The older part has been preserved and improved, the new acquisition—this house where I am staying used to be private property—is simply and suitably adapted, and charming hill-paths and terraces now join it to the already existing gardens. A numerous suite, if they did not expect too much, found it roomy and adequate. All that a gardener should see to in the way of lay-out and flowers has been done without any pedantry or timidity.

And it will remain as it is now; for the new young owners, too, have a feeling for what is good and appropriate, and for several years have proved it by staying here for varying periods. It is very comforting to feel that when a man dies he hands on to those who follow him some thread to guide them as they go along. And so I too will hold to this symbol he left me, and stay on here.

But you will want to know how your friend spends these long days from sunrise to sunset, in this airy castle from where he can look out over a charming valley with flat meadowland and fields



Medal of Goethe by David

stretching up to the inaccessible steep fringe of the forests. So let me confide to you that a stimulus from abroad has led me to take up my scientific studies again . . .

546 To GEORG, GRAND DUKE OF
MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ*

Weimar,
3rd September† 1828.

Surely this is the most delightful and original thought to remind me in my old age through this familiar chime of my first hours of childhood's awareness, when life, still wrapped in many layers of skin, was waiting with expectant wonder for what was to be. But these chimes also tell me most pleasantly that your Royal Highness too enjoyed them in former hopeful years. Not only do they take me back to that house which was my parents' home; every time they strike the hours they remind me that your Royal Highness too used them to count the mornings and evenings of youth.

It was such a beautiful idea and so difficult to carry out, and your Royal Highness surely could not have formed it unless you had foreseen the utter delight with which it was bound to fill me. I am sure your Royal Highness will likewise understand and feel how grateful I am, though I use few words.

And moreover this important gift reaches me at a time of deepest sorrow. In this most grievous loss it shows me most clearly what a fund of goodwill still exists on earth and what a magnificent share in it still remains to me; and this increases the worth of this gift immeasurably.

May I end here, persuaded that your Royal Highness is well able to supply the best and fullest commentary to this short text. May all that is good gather round you, my dear and honoured Prince, and may the true sympathy you show to those near you in their joy and sorrow, prove a complete reward to you.

547 To COUNT BRÜHL‡

Weimar,
25th October 1828.

How often have I not seen you, my very dear friend, found you

* He had sent Goethe as a birthday present the grandfather clock from the house of Goethe's parents in Frankfort, sold many years ago; he had himself once stayed there.

† Birthday of the late Grand Duke Carl August.

‡ Who had lost his eldest son.

and found you again, in pleasurable and promising circumstances and always with the same mutual affection; and to think of you now in charming, happy Seistersdorf whose name wakes so many welcome memories in me and whose most successful restoration you kindly described to me—to think of you there now, suffering grief and bereavement, even out of health, gives me a strange feeling indeed.

For when I received your affectionate and comforting letter of 25th August, after the bitter stroke that had befallen me, * a disaster unique of its kind for any man, I had to admit my good fortune in still possessing friends whose worth many years have proved, and whose affection, goodwill and sympathy seemed to incline them to bridge again the vast gap, torn in my life, with a comfortable pathway leading to the regions of the living.

I could not possibly think then that I should find you, my most valued friend, stricken in a similar fashion, in the same, indeed, but even greater measure.

At most we resign ourselves to what in the infinitely varied network of our earthly fate appears to bear an analogy with some process of nature. When old people are called away, we may accept this as after all a regular departure in the course of the years. That is why we always like to read the tales of the Patriarchs of old; for the man who is gathered to his fathers at a great age takes up his appropriate station just as the bridegroom standing by his bride does on his wedding day. We have to acknowledge this, for otherwise there could be no conceivable order in the sequence of circumstances.

But when things are reversed and the younger man is called away before the older one, this shocks us, for we consider that nature ought to be at least as reasonable as we ourselves are, for we are men only because we try to lend a certain order to our circumstances, and we would be wretched creatures indeed if we did not seek to maintain and safeguard ourselves and what is joined with us for to-morrow and the day after, for next year and the next decade.

I wrote all this immediately after receiving your precious letter. But then I stopped all at once, realising that here before me was that great problem which, it may well be, is not given to man to solve.

If we look at ourselves in every situation of our lives we find that from our first breath to our last we are conditioned by outward things. And yet we are left the supreme freedom to develop within

* The death of Carl August.

ourselves in such a way as to bring ourselves into harmony with the moral order of the world and so despite all possible hindrances to attain to peace with ourselves.

All that is soon said or written; but it rarely stands as a task before us, to the solution of which we are asked to devote our days. Every morning calls to us to do what belongs to it and to expect what it can give.

No more at present. Be assured of my most heartfelt sympathy. My sincerest greetings and remembrances to you and yours.

And now allow me to make an enquiry. You remember that I had your dear little son's likeness taken; if the sight of it does not awake fresh grief in you, the original is at your disposal, and I shall retain a copy. In any case it shall be preserved for you at any time.

With the truest assurance of my constant affection.

548 To C. L. F. SCHULTZ

Weimar,
10th January 1829.

. . . Your estimate of my 'Correspondence with Schiller' is quite correct. I might be called very naïve to publish this sort of thing, but I thought this was just the right moment to recall a picture of that period. You, my good friend, were young then and so were many other people of merit. You were working to develop your personality; we older men were also working to develop and sometimes going about it rather awkwardly. The Correspondence will really appeal most to the contemporaries of those days; it will amuse and please them. For it is most amusing, almost comic, to see the Letters starting with the high-sounding announcement of the 'Horen' and then immediately to find the editors and their friends at a loss for contributions. That really looks ridiculous; and yet, without that urge and will to give a picture of that stage of German literature, its whole course since then would have been different. Schiller's spirit had to find expression. I was just finishing 'Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre', and my whole mind was turning again to Italy. God forbid that anyone should try to recall the state of German literature then, though I am not denying its merits. But if some skilful writer does so, he will not blame me for not seeking help there. I had done all I could in my latest volumes in the Goeschen edition, e.g. I had poured some—perhaps too much—of my heart's blood into my 'Tasso'. And yet the worthy editor told

me—and I must take his word for it—that this edition was not selling well.

I fared even worse with 'Wilhelm Meister'. The puppets were too trivial for the cultured readers, the actors too disreputable for the gentlemen and the girls too frivolous. But the real trouble was, it wasn't 'Werther'. And I really do not know what would have become of me, but for Schiller's encouragement. The Correspondence shows this remarkably well. Meyer was back in Italy, and I had meant to follow him in 1797. But my friendship with Schiller, the interest I took in all he wrote and was and did, kept me here, or rather made me more eager to return once I had got as far as Switzerland and come somewhat nearer to the din of war beyond the Alps. If Schiller had not needed material for the 'Horen' and the 'Musenalmanach', I should never have written the 'Unterhaltungen der Ausgewanderten', nor translated Cellini's autobiography. I should not have written all those ballads and songs that appeared in the 'Musenalmanach', the 'Elegies' would not have been printed—at least not then—the 'Xenien' would not have buzzed, and a great many things in general and in many a particular case would have been different. A good deal of this can be seen from these six little volumes of Letters.

When you get this and read it, I hope it will tell you how your dear letter suddenly made me feel I had to talk with you again. A quiet evening has furnished the opportunity; so do take kindly what I make haste to write. Think of me at every good moment, and whenever possible let me have the main arguments on this important question* which you have already drafted in part.

I shall stop here so that the next post can bring you my thanks for your kind words and the earnest hope that the pauses in our correspondence will grow shorter in future.

549 To LA COMTESSE DE CHASSEPOT† *Weimar,*
13th January 1829.

I had to wait for these first evenings of the New Year before I had any leisure to write even a word or two to you, my unforgettable charming friend. But now let me assure you that since receiving your very kind letter, I have constantly thought of you. Believe

* About Roman antiquities in the Rhineland.

† Née Knabenau, now in Paris and formerly a member of Goethe's circle in the Bohemian spas.

me, I most sincerely share with you the happiness you describe. Now I am old I find it particularly refreshing to know that the good and worthy people I have met in the course of my life are comfortably situated and seem firmly and as far as is humanly possible, securely settled . . .

Let me now turn to another point in your letter. Provided you can pardon the hoax your friend [Count Belisle] indulged in during his travels, I suppose I must do so too. I never heard about the good man being in Weimar. And he certainly did not come to see me, as you can guess as soon as you glance at his not very skilfully invented account. To begin with, I have lived in society long enough to have learnt not to appear 'triste et abattu' before a total stranger. As for the words the unfortunate dramatist puts into my mouth, he has made me speak in a way that with your taste and knowledge, my dear friend, was bound to rouse your suspicions. In short, this man of honour has offended against you and me with his joke; I leave him entirely to your mercy.

One really has to be fairly good-natured to go on seeing strangers for so many years, having always to expect to be watched, spied-upon, questioned and yet misunderstood. But in spite of all the harm, there is some advantage to be had too; and I cannot bring myself to turn away the callers from far and near, provided I feel reasonably well. If I were travelling, I should meet every kind of stranger, so why not take this same trouble in my own room? During the autumn travelling season especially, it is most interesting; so many different faces and manners, ways of speaking and behaving pass before one in the course of a few hours.

550 To ZELTER

Weimar,
28th April 1829.

. . . The newest quarterly number of the 'Edinburgh Review of Foreign Literature' has just come; it is most remarkable what they think of the Continental authors. They are most conscientious and they have a high respect for their public. Seriousness, wealth of detail, moderation and sincerity characterise them, and their view is wonderfully wide and profound.

This letter had lain for some days and in the meantime I read Calderon's remarkable play 'Absolom's Locks' in the Gries translation. Perhaps it will reach you too at a suitable moment when you have leisure to read it.

It has recalled an old truth to my mind. I find that in the literature of modern times poetry is most closely linked with nature in Shakespeare and with the highest culture in Calderon. You cannot expect any clear idea of this from our contemporaries . . .

551 To THOMAS CARLYLE*

Weimar,
25th June 1829.

If only an echo could reach you and tell you every time we speak and think of you, you would very often feel you had a friendly visitor; I hope he would be welcome to sit at your cosy fireside while the snow hems you in among rocks and grassy slopes. The deep snow has often been a hindrance to us too this winter, even with our many main roads . . .

I do hope you will be kind enough to satisfy a wish I often voice to my distant friends. When I come to visit them in thought, I do not like to have my imagination at work in the void. So I like to ask for a drawing, a sketch of their house and its surroundings. May I make the same request now to you?

While you were living in Edinburgh, I did not venture to come and find you there. For how could I have hoped to find a quiet friend in that city of houses piled one above the other, so often pictured and yet still something of a mystery to me. But now you have moved, I have often tried to imagine the valley of the Nith with Dumfries on the left bank. From your description I take it that your house lies on the right bank, with the granite mountains hemming you in on the east. I have looked at all the detailed maps I could get, and am an experienced enough geologist to gain a general notion of the place. But that cannot show one what is characteristic about it. So please send me a drawing of your house as it stands towards the hills, and another with the view from your windows towards the valley and the river and in the direction of Dumfries. Perhaps you or your gifted wife could do a few of these drawings yourselves; or perhaps some visitor might be kind enough to do them. For I only mean a sketch, and we all know and have proof that the talent for sketching is universal in Britain.

I know enough of your countryman Burns to think highly of him; if he were still alive he would be your neighbour now. Your mentioning him in your letter is making me read his poems again

* At Craigenputtock.

and in particular the story of his life—most distressing reading, however, like the story of so many highly talented men.

We very seldom find the poetic gift united with the gift for ordering one's life and maintaining a certain position.

His poems showed me an independent spirit, able to seize the passing moment firmly and at the same time to see its cheerful side. I am afraid I could only appreciate this in a few of his poems, for the Scottish dialect at once confuses me and I have not time and opportunity to seek explanation of the details.

This has been lying, like a number of other letters to my best friends, among my 'Expediendis', but I shall send it off now at last, to tell you too I am despatching a small chest with the fourth and fifth instalment of my works. I hope this letter and what is following will find you and your dear wife well and happy and that we shall hear from you soon. Greetings from us all; the women-folk are putting in a little something.

552 To AMALIE VON LEVETZOV *2nd September 1829.*

It is a year now since, my dear old friend, you sent me your sympathy at that sad stroke of fate that overtook me. I saw him leave me, whom in the natural course of events and of my own wishes I should have preceded into the regions beyond.

Since that day I truly am only half alive; so I find it all the more comforting when kind friends and others prove to me that there is many a good feeling, many a loving heart whose kindness and affection is disposed to tend and fill the gap in my existence. My most heartfelt thanks to you for having so kindly shown yourself among the first to carry out this work of charity in my case.

Another instance of your kindness is your passing on at once your cheerful news of the latest happy event so welcome to your whole dear family. I hope its most recent member may thrive and flourish, and that, growing up amid loving care [your grandson] may be a joy to those around him. Give my regards to his good parents. I hope most seriously Fräulein Ulrike will read the most loyal greeting for herself too in this letter. And I do not doubt your youngest daughter is growing as charming as her sisters.

Let me close with most hearty good wishes and greetings once more, and with a request. Please be very kind and delight and refresh me from time to time by writing so charmingly and letting

me know that you and your dear daughters are well and happy.
And so for ever.

553 To ZELTER

Weimar,
1st November 1829.

. . . A few words about what I have been reading. I have reached the eighth volume of Bourienne's 'Mémoires'. Here we find our own recollections together with explanations. Bourienne has a new and remarkable view on one important point in the story; according to him it is highly probable that Napoleon never intended to cross to England. Instead he used this pretext to hide his true aim of forming the core of a great force that could be turned to anything. Round this he disposed and stationed a mass of troops so as to be able to get them to the Rhine and across it in the shortest possible time. He was most successful in this, too, and invested and took Ulm in spite of what everyone thought and supposed; to say nothing of the further results of this march. We wonder afresh, recalling it all again, and we were lucky indeed that while we were living through these events we were not fully aware of how momentous they were.

Something about myself now. Everything I am doing at the moment is purely 'testamentary'. The seventh instalment [of the new edition of my 'Works'] has already been sent off, the eighth is as good as ready, and by Easter I should have reached the goal; I hardly dared hope I should live to do so.

But now I must try to arrange anything of value in my remaining papers, whether begun only or sketched out. And I must look through my correspondence of the last few years. But I feel I should first of all rescue whatever I have done for science. Not a single one of the three hundred scientists assembled [in Berlin] approaches my way of thinking in the slightest degree, and that may be quite a good thing. For approaches only lead to errors. It is confessions that are needed if one means to leave behind anything of use to posterity. One has to stand there as an individual with what one thinks and what one means by it. Then each of those who come after can take what suits him and what may have some general application. Our ancestors have done much for us in this way.

That brings me to the end for to-day.

Heard Paganini last night.

Weimar,
16th January 1830.

The head of Medusa has arrived safely and deserves my utmost gratitude. My best thanks to both the artist and you for having it made for me.

But now let me come next to your letter and say this in reply; if you do not hear directly from me for some time, my dear, do tell yourself it is only that I am busy with something to please you with later on. Even my most far-reaching activities have of late not always extended to the top of the house; I had to content myself with the view from the warm room out into the snow-covered garden, if I was to remain my own self and advance my work at all . . .

I shall use this remaining space to express my astonishment at our President's youthful escapade.† Age is no protection from folly and neither are the sciences. We who have grown old while acting foolishly many a time ought not to cast the first stone, of course, or pride ourselves if we have been lucky and come off better. But this is rather too bad a case; who can tell what it will lead to—except that in this frivolous world even the most important things are forgotten in no time . . .

Let us soon have the pleasure of seeing the fruits of your well and cleverly spent hours . . .

Weimar,
29th January 1830.

I ought not to complain as I know that the whole of Europe, just like my own cloistered garden, is lying under the snow and yet has to manage somehow. It is all the easier for me, too, as I am not asked to set foot out of doors. In the clear night-sky Venus is shining in the west over the horns of the young moon, clear and bright and serene and Orion with his hound in its sparkling collar is rising gloriously over my dark sky-line of firs. It is this that inspires me to send a cheerful friendly note to you in your well-lighted, bustling town.

* In Bonn, sister of the philosopher; she had sent a drawing of the head of Medusa in the museum of Cologne.

† Professor Nees von Esenbeck, the botanist, having been married for twenty-six years, had run off with another professor's wife, who had been married for twenty years.

And let me say this in answer to your last letter. Friends, especially friends of our age, do well to go on discussing any incidental points on which there are different opinions, and not simply pass over them. So I heartily welcome all you have to say on Aristotle's much debated statement; it is the fullest commentary on both your views and mine. Differences like these are important, for when we come to look closer, it is not an isolated case that we are debating. Two parties are here opposed, two ways of thinking, that quarrel over a detail, each in the hope of defeating the other altogether. *We* are struggling for the perfection of the work of art *in itself and for its own sake*; the others are thinking of its outward effect, a matter to which the real artist gives no more thought than nature does when she produces a lion or a humming bird . . .

Let me add something further, just for fun. In my 'Wahlverwandtschaften' I endeavoured to bring about the true, essential *Catharsis* as purely and entirely as possible. But that doesn't mean I imagine my book could purify any young man coveting his neighbour's wife. The great Jehovah thought the Sixth Commandment so necessary that with His own finger He cut it in the tables of stone in the desert; all our catechisms on paper will always have to retain it.

Forgive me. It is such a vital matter that friends always ought to discuss it. And let me add that our old Kant did the world—and me, I may add—an infinite service when in his 'Critique of Judgement' he put art and nature side by side and conceded to them the right to act in accordance with great principles but without immediate purpose. Spinoza, too, had already confirmed me in my hatred of those absurd 'final causes'. Nature and art are too great to aim at mere purposes, and they do not need to, for all things are interrelated, and what after all is life but these interrelations? . . .

556 To OTTILIE VON GOETHE*

Weimar,
23rd March 1830.

My friendly Opinion.

I advise against printing the poem [on the late Grand Duchess†], which I return with this. It is a one-sided eulogy of the deceased and might wound those she left behind. Purple, ermine, jewels and

* Who was editing 'Chaos', a literary periodical, circulated almost exclusively among friends in Weimar.

† The Dowager Grand Duchess Louise had died on February 14th.

pearls belong to a princess, and people can even demand that she should adorn herself with them.

So if she omits to do so, keeps her jewels in her casket and appears simply dressed, that is just in keeping with the rest of her way of thinking and living. It can neither be singled out for notice nor praise. I leave this to your further consideration.

557 To THOMAS CARLYLE*

Weimar,
14th April 1830.

Your precious box was prevented from reaching the Continent by the exceptionally severe winter, but it arrived safely here about mid-March.

In speaking of its contents I must mention first of all the most precious lock of hair. I should have liked well to see it on its dear owner's head, but alone here it almost frightened me. For the contrast was too striking. I did not need to feel my scalp to know that there is only stubble there now, and there was no need to look in the glass to realise that a long succession of years has given it a vile colour. The impossibility, therefore, of meeting Mrs Carlyle's request for a lock in return, struck me painfully and forced me to think thoughts one usually shuns. All I could do in the end was to console myself with the idea that a gift like this has to be most gratefully received without the hope of making an adequate return. It shall be reverently treasured in this pocket-book, so worthy of it, and only what I cherish most shall join it there.

I can assure you that the elegant Scottish bonnet has been a source of great pleasure. We have had visits for many years now from inhabitants of the three kingdoms, and they enjoyed spending some time among us and appreciated the good society here. Though there were few Scots among these, yet the memory of one of them is certain to live still in my fair daughter's heart, and so this magnificent Scotch bonnet, with its thistle too, is a most precious ornament in her eyes. I know the kind sender would be glad if she could see the sweetest face in all the world peeping out from under it. Otilie thanks her most warmly; as soon as the mourning [for our late Grand Duchess] is over, she will not fail to shine out in her new finery.

* Whose last parcel had contained among other things a lock of Jane Welsh-Carlyle's hair; 'except to her husband she never did the like to a man'.

Let me tell you now of something I shall be sending you in exchange. It will be ready by June, the best time of the year for this. Here are the contents:

(1) A copy of your 'Life of Schiller', in German, decorated with pictures of your country home and accompanied by a few pages of my own, in which I have tried to introduce this little book more easily here, and in particular to stimulate intercourse between our two countries and literatures. I wrote these pages knowing the public, and used passages from our correspondence. I hope this will meet with your approval and not be interpreted as an indiscretion. In my younger days I should altogether have avoided giving this sort of information; but old age ought not to despise these methods. It was the favourable reception the Schiller Correspondence has had that led me to think of it and to venture on it . . .

1830-1832

Der ist der glücklichste Mensch, der das Ende seines Lebens mit dem Anfang in Verbindung setzen kann.

Maximen und Reflexionen

He is the happiest man who can bring the close of his life into line with its beginning.

Maxims and Reflections

TOWARDS the beginning of 1830 Goethe had become increasingly anxious about his son's health. August, now aged forty, had undoubted gifts, though he was not a creative artist. His work as an official and as the helper of his beloved and admired father was not enough to satisfy him, and yet he felt unable to find another sphere of activity. His marriage too was not a happy one, and his effort to make up for this by plunging into one distraction after another only served to increase his nervous excitability. He was quite conscious of the dangers of this way of life and thought travel might provide the best cure. Italy appeared to him, as it had done to his father and grandfather, as the 'promised land'. He set out on 2nd April 1830, his father giving him as companion his own secretary Dr Eckermann, who became well known later on when he published his conversations with Goethe.

The journey at first seemed to benefit August, his health improved, but towards the end of July the carriage in which he was travelling overturned, he broke his collarbone and, though he was able to continue the journey, he never quite recovered; on 26th October, a few days after his arrival in Rome, he died of a fever, probably smallpox. Goethe received the news on 10th November. He at first seemed able to bear this heavy blow, but a fortnight later a severe haemorrhage brought him to the verge of death. Yet by December he was again able to resume his usual life and work. Fortunately everything was peaceful again in Weimar and the small risings of the previous summer, incited by the July Revolution in Paris, had long been overcome. The French revolution of 1830 had only slight repercussions in Germany, and Weimar in particular, including the University of Jena, was, owing to Carl August's liberal policy, not to be easily influenced by revolutionary ideas.

The stream of visitors to Weimar and to Goethe continued undiminished; among them were, besides his more intimate friends, in his latter years Felix Mendelssohn, the poets Heinrich Heine and Grillparzer and the Englishmen Thackeray, Crabb Robinson who described his visits to Goethe in his *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence*, Charles de Voeux, translator of Goethe's *Tasso*, Sir Charles Murray and John Murray of the London publishing firm and John Mellish, a British diplomat. The exchange of letters with his old correspondents too was in no way reduced, but their circle was increased, for instance by Spontini, the Italian composer, then living in Berlin. On his birthday, 28th August 1831, 'Fifteen English Friends' sent him a seal; its design was a star with the inscription: '*Ohne Hast, doch ohne Rast*', a quotation from Goethe's *Xenien*. The letter accompanying this gift ended with the words: 'We pray that many years be added to a life so glorious—that all

happiness may be yours, and strength given to complete your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste, yet without rest.' The fifteen friends included Thomas Carlyle and his brother, Sir Walter Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, G. Moir, who had translated Schiller's *Wallenstein*, Lord Francis Lewison Gower, translator of *Faust*, Proctor, W. Fraser, editor of the *Foreign Review* and Lockhart, editor of the *Edinburgh Quarterly*.

Goethe's interest in various branches of science seemed as keen as ever; he wrote several essays mainly on botanical problems and on the history of his own scientific studies and assisted Soret, tutor to the Hereditary Prince and amateur scientist, in his French translation of the *Metamorphose der Pflanzen*. Goethe's literary work consisted mainly in an introduction to the German translation of Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, in some short poems, some additions to the last book of his autobiography and in the several scenes and verses which finally completed *Faust* in the last year of his life.

Throughout that year Goethe's health had been good, but on 16th March 1832 he caught a cold and had to take to bed. He recovered enough after a few days to resume some work and to dictate some letters. The letter to Wilhelm von Humboldt of 17th March is his last one.

Signor Manzoni is requested to be kind enough to receive Goethe's son with his companion Dr Eckermann; they bring my sincerest greetings.

Your very kind letter, my dear friend, arrived just at the right moment. The feeling of having lost one's oldest and closest patrons and friends will keep returning. There is such a hollow, empty feeling round one now, especially when something occurs that during all those years one would have told them and talked over with them.

But now I seem to see a friendly light gleaming across the wide world; it draws nearer and I find a true and most treasured friend. That is indeed a bright star shining out to us from a gloomy cloudy sky. And learning at the same time that this dear friend is well, I feel comforted again. For it is often true that in the midst of our own troubles, the troubles of those nearest to our mind and heart weigh us down still more.

But let me say this in answer to your dear kindly words. Our new young Sovereigns have shown themselves in the last few weeks graciously disposed to do everything that could be done for my comfort, just as in former days. The Grand Duchess in particular shows endless consideration and skill in furthering what is entrusted to my care and all that affects me. In this way she is able to persuade me that much of the good I have begun will live on after me. I am sure you will feel glad with me over this, just as I have shared in your circumstances as you described them.

The kindly strangers, too, who come to see me bring me a good deal in return for the hour they take from me. And even that hour does not matter unless I have to break off or at least halt an important thread of ideas just to learn how things are at some particular spot in the world of men that does not concern me in the slightest. If I were quite fair, though, and weighed it up, I should always find myself the gainer. For it is far from being a trifle to see so many

* From the Italian.

† In Paris.

pass by who are representative of their countrymen and among whom there are some outstanding people.

Herr David, the distinguished [French] sculptor can vouch for my friendly welcome to the French visitors. He came with a request to make a bust of me. I agreed, because it could be done within three or four days. But the good man proceeded to bring into the house a mass of clay from which the Lord God could quite easily have formed an entire Adam. So we devoted some weeks to this task. Well, in the end, I hear, this vast image is now in Paris, in this excellent man's studio. I should be most pleased, my dear friend, if you went and saw it there. If you find it resembles your truly faithful friend, and if you like it, I am sure the worthy artist will be very happy. Ultimately the main point will be whether a lasting likeness like this is at all comparable with the transient being that is passing away.

560 To ZELTER

29th April 1830.

. . . I feel I must make you a very strange confidence; I have taken a sudden firm decision and renounced all reading of newspapers. I am going to content myself with what social intercourse tells me. This decision is most important for when one comes to consider it, it is sheer philistinism for us private people to devote such interest to what doesn't concern us.

For six weeks now I have left all the French and German papers lying in their wrappers, and I cannot tell you how much time I have saved and all I have managed to do.

The last volumes of my Works are in the printer's hands now, all my more important letters and replies are written. Let me tell you a secret; I am fortunate indeed in my old age, for it would be worth living my life again to follow up and to carry out the ideas that still rise in me. So do not let us waste the remaining daylight over trifles . . .

561 To AUGUST VON GOETHE*

*Weimar,
11th May 1830.*

It is man who thinks, necessity and good sense that guide. I find it both natural and sensible for you [and Eckermann] to have left

* In Italy.

the mad mail-coach and travelled on at leisure. By all means enjoy from day to day whatever the world offers you of its goodness and splendour and keep your main object in view. All I want is for you to digest it all, bodily and spiritually; all spiritual and bodily pleasures are wholesome if we know how to make use of them . . .

I have no news about myself except that I am just well enough to carry out what my feelings and circumstances oblige me to do. Ottilie will be telling you the rest, about any new betrothals and other domestic and personal matters . . .

I have parted now with the text for the last instalment of my works. Eckermann has left the rest of my papers in most praiseworthy order, for which my thanks go with him as he crosses the Alps. My introduction to Carlyle's 'Life of Schiller' is finished too, and I hope it will help this little work out of the shallows where it seemed to have got stranded. I have taken the opportunity of putting some strange things before the public. There is also a long essay on Zahn's descriptive work on Pompeii, ready to send off to Vienna; I hope it may have some good influence.

And there is a great deal more still to be done, but you must imagine me principally taken up with botany. As soon as Fromann is back from the Leipzig Fair, we shall begin the publication of the original [of my 'Metamorphosis of Plants'] together with Soret's [French] translation. That will keep us busy and happy till Michaelmas.

The new garden gate stands proudly in the meadow, its structure is very fine. Roads-Inspector Götze sent me some black and white pebbles for a mosaic at the entrance . . .

562 To CHANCELLOR FRIEDRICH V. MÜLLER

Weimar,
21st May 1830.

Here is our worthy Niethammer's letter back again, my good friend; I have found in it his honest, faithful qualities, his vivid recollection of former happy days, the same warmth of feeling for the present that he always used to have for the past. But I wonder: he will pardon me if I say that I do not hold the same view about this business [of people writing against me].

My invariable maxim in my old age must be to live at peace, absolutely and in all circumstances. I want on no account to appear

to take an active part in any sort of dispute, whether over politics, literature or moral questions.

What would become of the beautiful days still granted to me, if I were to take notice of all that is said in my own country against me and those nearest to me? Our worthy friend probably knows better than I do what vexation and malice, rudeness, unpleasantness and hostility are voiced against me. I only know as much as some sympathetic friend or well-meaning correspondent mentions to me. But I have heard that even in [Bavaria], that kingdom whose sovereign seems to me like the brightest of stars watching kindly over me, a most offensive statement has been made. What is even stranger, this has been [printed in a periodical] brought out by my own most excellent publisher's firm, with whom I have had the friendliest relations for many years. Yet has anyone ever heard even a syllable of complaint from me?

My best greetings to our esteemed friend in Munich; I hope what I have written here will incline him to approve of my giving no account at all of this matter, but leaving it to the public to think and judge as they will. I am using these days to rectify in me what can still be rectified, believing that in so doing I am fulfilling the aim and will of the Providence that has so blessed me all through life.

All my good wishes and please do not worry.

563 To ZELTER*

Weimar,
3rd June 1830.

It is 9.30, a cloudless sky and splendid sunshine, and our dear, gifted Felix is leaving with Ottilie, Ulrike and the children after a happy fortnight with us. He has charmed us all with his perfect, delightful music. He is now going to Jena to be a joy to his well-wishing friends there, and he leaves here a memory which will always be treasured.

I particularly enjoyed his being here for I found my reaction to music still the same. It rouses interest, pleasure and thoughts in me, and I like to hear it chronologically, for how could one understand anything without having studied the events that led up to it? Fortunately Felix has a sound grasp of history, and his good memory provides him at will with examples of every sort. Starting with Bach's times, he made the music of Haydn, Mozart and Gluck live

* After a visit by Felix Mendelssohn to Weimar.

again for me. He gave me a general idea of the later composers, masters of technique, and finally he led me to understand his own compositions and think over them. So altogether he leaves here laden with my blessings.

I have let you know all this at once to encourage you to write back. Convey my best greetings to this outstanding young musician's worthy parents in the most expressive way you can. And give your kindly plant-lover the enclosed note. Don't forget me. I may not be at all times an easy friend, but I am always eagerly and earnestly striving, and love to benefit by your example. And so for ever.

564 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

Weimar,
29th June 1830.

By the strangest chances it was only to-day that I read your little note, Milan the 2nd June. So that is why it is not mentioned in my letter of the 27th.

Nevertheless this is to tell you that I am preparing to send you something to Rome and presume that you will be going there. You will probably receive this letter and that one at the same time, and let me say most explicitly and solemnly that I will be very pleased indeed to read in your diary of your entry by the *Porta del Popolo*. Now that the journey has already done you so much good in mind and body, you should be able to decide with increasing ease and freedom what may be useful to you in the future.

According to your note you returned from Venice by way of Florence and Genoa to Milan; so I should say you could now go on to Rome either more quickly or by some other way. From this distance I can give you no advice at all on this. The main thing is still for you to come into contact with new objects and new people. So think over on your own and with our good friend Mylius what would be best. Go to places you have not yet seen, glean more from those you have seen; every place can then yield the greatest treasures.

On your tour to the South, whether you go by Lodi, Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Bologna and Ravenna to the Adriatic, or whether you come from Rimini on that coast to Loretto and then on to Rome, is for you to decide and to carry out with the same good sense as before. You must always remind yourself that your aim is to absorb a great world and to free your mind of any cramping

limitations. You must convince yourself that with this in view it is of no importance even if you miss a few agate-beads out of the much-praised rosary. So you can assure Mylius the banker in Milan in my name that I shall refund any and every sum made over to you and shall at once settle any bills of exchange.

You will hardly complete the journey you sketch out from Venice in four weeks, so this letter will probably reach you in Milan.

If, as is quite possible, Eckermann is now satisfied with what he has seen, give him the means to return in comfort; he shall be welcome here, with all that he has to bring. I am looking forward to seeing the medals; if you find others like them, do not grudge the outlay on them. We have of course some excellent ones already: but there are still many going about, recognised and unrecognised. Bertholdo's medal of Mahomet the Second, for instance, instructs and delights me every day. While you are looking round you in the wide world, I am once more enjoying some etchings and drawings acquired for moderate sums; the artist's spirit shines out in them even though his achievements have been greater. Herr von Müller sends best greetings and is pleased at your praising the original of the Madonna in Venice, for he was delighted with even a copy in Bologna. Ottilie sends special greetings; she is not well, but dear and good as ever. Your little girl grows more amusing every day.

And so on and on.

565 To AUGUST VON GOETHE

*Weimar,
5th July 1830.*

The safe arrival of your box has made this a day of rejoicing, so let me send you back something cheerful too.

Mother and children are delighted to be remembered so charmingly, Alma is running about in her little red frock and the boys, who are still away, will be so pleased with the real Milanese souvenirs when they come back. And as for the collector of coins, he can hardly tell you how overjoyed he is.

Without exaggerating, to begin with the price, I should be embarrassed if a dealer asked twice the amount for them. They are most remarkable examples, dating right on from earliest to later times, and in excellent preservation. Our collection, after a long stationary period, has really entered on a new and happy phase . . .

It is a joy to me to see how well you understand these things, what a good judgement and memory you have. When things are at reasonable prices, go on looking at them and considering their value. I am not exaggerating when I say that for me, thinking of what we own so far, this already makes your journey successful.

And go on keeping your diaries as fully as before. Your last letters from Venice have arrived too, and believe me, these pages are doubly and trebly delightful to all who read them, because you are so faithful in recording what you see, and so indefatigable in seeing everything, in going back to it again and taking it in thoroughly. Besides, inner contentment is obviously growing in you, and that after all is what is most important if we are to value and enjoy the present.

I shall keep these coins by themselves and everything else you sent home. It will give point to our conversations in future and make us enjoy refreshing our memories as well as improving our knowledge . . .

566 To AUGUST VON GOETHE*

Weimar,
19th August 1830.

I want you to have a letter in Florence, so I am writing myself, as I am still hesitating about telling others of your accident. Our imagination is never so anxious as in its struggles to get where help is needed, though at the same time it is well aware of its utter helplessness.

You have so far made such excellent use of your journey and now you are bearing this extremely unpleasant happening with a stout heart too. I hope that already as I am writing you have made some recovery. And now about what you mention besides. I approve of your plan. Florence and Bologna and then Munich will keep you very busy; the former two places will show you the serious side of art, and then Munich a special busy kind of life. Treat all you learn as you have done hitherto and you cannot fail to come back enriched. And then I trust you will be fully recovered and share lovingly and gladly in the blessed tranquillity we are now enjoying at home here.

* Who had broken his collarbone in a carriage-accident on the very day after Eckermann had left for Germany.

*Weimar,
3rd September to 2nd
October 1830.*

I have received your extension of leave until the end of the year, thanks to Herr von Gersdorff's prompt kindness. I am hoping to greet you in Rome with it, unless evil spirits have thought out fresh trials to delay you . . .

30th September 1830.

This letter was put aside for several days. Your very excellent diary-letters up to the 13th September have arrived safely, to our joy and satisfaction; and now we can hope for some more . . .

Zahn's help will by now have made you quite at home in Pompeii. May all go well with you; and may this splendid preparation be the best introduction for your entry into Rome, where we have already pictured you in our minds. And after coming through that majestic storm at sea, we congratulate you on being refreshed by the magnificent sight of Naples.

About things here I must tell you something you might otherwise hear in an exaggerated form. The evil I mentioned earlier, [the unrest as a consequence of the revolution in France,] has come nearer and nearer to us. Gera and Altenburg, especially the latter, have suffered a great deal of damage. Things have been unsettled in Jena for over a fortnight; though sensible people did what they could, in the end the troops had to be sent there. Here too the wildest threats have been bandied about and men named who were to be attacked, both themselves and their houses. The Grand Duke was away, but after a little hesitation it was decided to bring in the whole army, 800 men in all. With them and other precautions we hope to manage. Some skill was needed to quieten Eisenach and Ilmenau. You are lucky to be living in the splendid Campagna, though the great military parades and reviews you have seen seem to point to precautionary measures there too.

That is all for now; the family send their greetings in the enclosed. Otilie keeps true to her 'consular and editorial duties' and wears enormous hats on festive occasions. The boys are well-behaved and like to be in company. They are getting on with their music, and we shall see how they do in their other studies. Your little girl is marvellously bright and strong-willed, but her mind is

always easily turned to something else, so she is most charming company.

568 To A. L. DE CHEZY*

Weimar,
9th October 1830.

You surely cannot have doubted of my gratitude, my dear Sir, at receiving this beautiful gift you have so kindly sent me. Immediately after, however, the momentous times suddenly began during which we were very anxious about our good friends in Paris. But now this is over to the satisfaction of all, now that I can be sure that none of those nearest to my thoughts have suffered any harm, I feel all the more free to write this and tell you what a very outstanding gift your [French] translation of the 'Sakuntala' is to me.

The first time I came across this inexhaustible work, it roused such enthusiasm in me and so held me that I could not stop studying it. I even felt impelled to make the impossible attempt to bring it in some form on to the German stage. These efforts were fruitless, but they made me so thoroughly acquainted with this most valuable work, it represented such an epoch in my life, I so absorbed it, that for thirty years I did not look at either the English or the German version.

But here now comes your translation, made after a thorough study of the original, and greets me in my later years. Mine is an age when the content of a work of art, which used to determine one's interest in the main, now carries almost no weight; one feels able to appreciate its treatment almost solely, but all the more highly.

Let me summarise my observations here. It is only now that I understand the enormous impression this work made on me then. The poet appears in it in his loftiest aspect, as representative of the simplest state, the finest way of life, the purest moral endeavour, the noblest majesty and the sincerest religious feeling. At the same time, however, he remains so fully master of his creation that he can risk contrasts which, though common and ridiculous, must be regarded as necessary links joining the whole structures in one.

I begin to realise all this now by means of the French language, so subtle and so truly refined. I seem to hear again at the same time everything serene and beautiful and forceful that I ever heard in that tongue . . .

* A French Orientalist.

Weimar,
2nd December 1830.

My dear friends, you will see by the enclosed request that after renunciation, loss and suffering all we can do is to think out pleasures if not for ourselves yet for others.

We are busy here getting ready to make the grandchildren's Christmas as gay as possible at least for them. They are learning, practising their music and playing, eager for this season to come and as merry as though no one here were full of saddest longing.

To set my dear friends' mind at rest let me say that, all things considered, I couldn't be better in health.

Thanks once again for all you so kindly sent. You will soon have the pictures promised for Christmas packed in the samples of carpets which I am returning with thanks but without further instructions. The green one would have been my choice, if it had been the moment to furnish the house. And so for ever.

Weimar,
27th December 1830.

The longer I put off writing to you, my very dear Kestner, the harder I find it; and it would end by being quite impossible if I did not decide now to say just what comes into my mind. It is always difficult to summon and collect oneself again after a severe blow, and it is only after a while that we realise properly to whom our gratitude for help is mainly due. And then we are at once convinced that words are quite inadequate to express it.

When I join you in thought in Rome, I have to recall again the state of anxious doubt in which I spent the last eight months. My son was travelling for his health, and his first letters from Italy were most reassuring and encouraging. He had travelled by Milan and all through Lombardy, and had been full of sound and cheerful interest for its rich fields, its wonderful lakes. This lasted till Venice and his return to Milan. His regular diary showed a keen, untroubled eye for nature and art; he took pleasure in applying and extending the varied knowledge he already possessed. This went

* With the request to send a box with a conjuror's outfit for a 12 year old boy.

† Hanoverian attaché in Rome, son of Lotte Kestner, née Buff; he had sent the news of August's death to Goethe.

on till he reached Genoa where he was happy in meeting an old friend, and soon after this he parted from Dr Eckermann, his companion until then, who returned to Germany.

On the way from Genoa to Spezia he unfortunately broke his collarbone, and this detained him for almost four weeks. But he was brave and good-humoured over this misfortune too, and over an attendant skin-disease, though both must have been most trying in the height of summer. He still kept his diaries regularly and did not leave Spezia until he had seen the surrounding country thoroughly and had even visited the quarantine building. He made exemplary use of a short stay at Carrara and a longer one in Florence; his interest in his surroundings was consistent. His diaries could serve as a guidebook to any like-minded traveller.

He then left Leghorn by steamboat and after coming through a severe storm landed on a day of festivities in Naples. Here he found that excellent artist, Herr Zahn, who had become a real friend of ours during his stay in Germany and who met him with every kindness and acted as a perfect guide and adviser to him.

I must confess, however, that I was not altogether happy about his letters from there. They hinted at a certain hastiness, an unhealthy exaltation, although what he carefully observed and noted was still in much the same style as before. He came to feel quite at home in Pompeii; his feelings, remarks and all he did there were gay, even amusing.

An express-journey to Rome was not soothing to his mind, already over-excited.

Here, alas, your friendly actions, your help, your solicitude, your care, your grief, make a sad sequel to the letters I received. I shall only add what is obvious. I had cherished the hope of seeing him come back well and happy and of handing over to him for the future his share in our common interests, the management of the household, the support of his wife and the upbringing of his children. But now all this remains to weigh upon me. I am now daily and hourly obliged to arrange laboriously all I had hoped to hand over to his younger energies.

To add to all this I have a good deal to complete and to arrange in my poetic, scientific and other activities. Much has still to be prepared and re-arranged for publication. I have to care for my family's future and at the same time I cannot entirely withdraw from certain contacts with society. When you remember all this you will realise that I lead a more strenuous life than can altogether

be expected of my age. But we mortals are never given any rest from strife and struggle here, our whole life long. Indeed, at the end of last month I was seized with a serious illness from which I was lucky enough to recover as soon as I did. So now at the end of my days I feel as if I were having to make a fresh start. I must stop here, assuring you once more that I fully appreciate the real worth of all that acquaintances and friends in Rome did to entertain and help my son during his short stay and the arrangements they made after his death . . .

My mind is somewhat set at ease by knowing that Herr Privy Councillor Müller will have been kind enough to arrange everything that had to be seen to and settled. His attentions allow me to hope I have at least in some small measure carried out my sad duty . . .

571 To BOISSERÉE

Weimar,
20th March 1831.

Let me reply with many thanks to your kind note sent by Herr von Conta.

I do not quite recollect if in my last letter I drew your attention to volumes 51 and 52 of the Vienna Yearbooks; but if despite this you have not opened these noble pages, I cannot be to blame if no further news has reached you from the Weimar lovers of art. In short, in the first you may find how I acquainted myself with Zahn's antiquities of Pompeii, and in the second how Meyer has been looking round for the finest engravings and lithographies. You may rest assured that, as you yourself say, our deepest interest in what is good and estimable continues to grow and to be enhanced in the most wonderful way. In my present state I can devote myself only to what I must admire, and this certainly embraces your activities, assiduously covering a wide and highly important field; though at times laborious, they are also honourably and beneficially furthered.

On the subject of your portrait let me say: it is a charming likeness, but you have passed through Cornelius's eye and hand. It may also be that a dear loving wife would have introduced the whole 'habit', as we students of natural history call it, of a valued friend to our greater satisfaction. Forgive me, but my Schmeller drawing contains more of the essential Sulpiz Boisserée; the final

one is a worthy man, but like many another one could find. As you realise, this is all just talking this way and that, without really describing or deciding anything, wavering words, like so many we hear about nature and art.

All I have to say about myself is that I cannot be thankful enough that Fate has shown itself so kind to me. It has allowed me to recover mentally and bodily in a way that makes me just able to deal again with the present. For as you can imagine those great calamities that affected my circumstances and myself at the end of last year were bound greatly to alter my relations with the world. Though I myself remained the same, it was hard to take up again active functions that I had long since handed over. It was a very considerable task for me to change from grandfather to head of the household, from master to steward. I have done it however; and my daughter and grandchildren behave in such a way that their willing obedience and charm, their extraordinary unobtrusive thoughtfulness and their harmony among themselves are a continual source of joy to me. But even that is not saying enough. Only something between an idyll and a fairy-tale could give a real picture of this way of acting and the comfort everywhere.

The edition of my 'Metamorphosis of Plants', the original and the translation, with biographical and literary additions that many readers may welcome, will be completed at Easter about halfway, but just up to a suitable point. It is an extraordinary state in which one sees one's thoughts translated directly into French and seems to feel that *there* they will not be really suitable. Here we are the active ones, while all our life long we have had so much to suffer from translations.

I do not know if you have heard of an article of mine in the 'Berliner Monatsschrift'; I have touched on the controversy between Cuvier and St. Hilaire that has broken out despite all academic conventions, [and have criticised Cuvier's insistence on a fixed number of God-given immutable species]. I shall be careful not to get any further involved, although even in the midst of fearful political upheavals scientific matters can all go on as usual, just as cobblers, tailors, etc., ply their trades in times of war and famine.

As I must start a fresh page here in order not to interrupt what I had begun to say, I should like to ask you first of all to thank Herr Ober-Bergrat Kleinschrot most heartily for the rare fossil remains. - - - In fear of some chance interruption I am sending this off at once.

Weimar,
29th March 1831.

It is more than a year, my dear Sir, since I received your valued letter and the welcome parcel. Let me assure you, however belatedly, how greatly I appreciated—as I still do—the wonderful Dedication in the handwriting of the most esteemed Lord Byron. For everything that a man like this says is of importance, and particularly so when he indulges in playful invective, in polemic-satirical liveliness.

But that paper is of still greater significance in having been recently reprinted, and this with the omission of certain passages which, possessing the whole, I can supply; these show me his opinion of people whose productions he could not find estimable even though a large section of the public finds satisfaction in them.

Now you have shown me a great kindness in sending me the first volume of that important work, and I may be allowed to hope you will continue to delight me with the subsequent ones. I have tried to give proof of my lively interest in this most important work by sending the editor, through Mr Robinson, a copy of the precious letter with which Lord Byron honoured me while in Leghorn; this is now being printed with the rest. It still saddens me that Lord Byron, so impatient with the fickle public, did not see how well the Germans understand him and how highly they think of him. With us all moral and political ephemeral gossip falls away, leaving his own self and his talent standing alone, brilliant in their excellence. And I venture to say this: whoever either now or in the future can form even an approximate notion of this unusual character, whoever is able to appreciate it in its individuality without praise or blame, can boast of a great gain. For my part at least this endeavour brings me great satisfaction.

I am very pleased too that you have made me better acquainted with the name and circumstances of the author of the didactic poem 'King Coal's Levée'. It is such an uncommon thing to meet with the production of a well-informed, cheerful man, of much wit, which besides is of some definite didactic application, that one is very glad to be better informed about the personality of the author.

If you could convey a friendly word to Mr Scafe during his stay in the North of England, and assure him of my interest in his brilliant writing, it would be a happy hour for him. For no matter

* Bookseller and publisher in London.

how resigned an author may be to being perhaps completely forgotten, it will always be a pleasant feeling for him to hear an affectionate voice.

And now let me draw your attention to another person, who, as taste is at present, can scarcely make himself known. He is the Salisbury artist, D. C. Read, known to me through his landscape etchings.

As I say this worthy artist does not enjoy the comfort of any marked notice at the moment, for his talents are in contrast to the prevailing taste. Everything for the fashionable world has to take the form of microscopic engravings and therefore to use a technique hardly discernible to the naked eye. This artist's engravings, however, have something rough about them that displeases one, particularly in the clouds; he may not have sufficiently studied them according to Howard. But he has rendered certain effects of night and twilight and tasteful rural scenes very well indeed, and I should be surprised if among the many lovers of art in England some were not to be found who rate this able and natural style at its true worth. He is sure to have an agent in London whom you might be able to find. It might amuse you to enquire about him. I at least am always glad of an opportunity to find out more about problematic talents which cannot come into evidence because of the prevailing thought.

I hope you will see in this detailed letter the reason for my long delay; I had meant to say so much and there was besides so much to say, that I could hardly make the attempt to begin until I found sufficient opportunity; and this happened precisely at the moment when various matters from and concerning England came to act as a stimulus upon me. Mr Robinson who has much that is pleasantly informative to give us, is in Italy now. If he should return because of the present unrest, pray give him my very hearty greetings, as you will be meeting him sometimes.

With my profound respects.

573 To ZELTER

Weimar,
1st June 1831.

My good friend, do go on sending me an occasional sheaf from the rich harvest around you. I am confining myself entirely to a cloistered existence; in short I mean to finish the Second Part of

my 'Faust'. In one's eighty-second year it is no trifle to bring before the public what one drafted in one's twentieth. It means that this skeleton, already long living in my mind, has now to be clothed with sinews, flesh and skin, and perhaps the folds of a cloak will then have to be draped round what is already finished, so that together it all remains a simple riddle, something for man's enjoyment and thought from now on . . .

574 To AUGUST KESTNER

Weimar,
11th June 1831.

. . . I am eagerly awaiting the arrival [of the casts of carved stones] you are so kindly sending me.

But let me add one thing; would it be feasible and suitable for the spot where my son lies to be marked in some very simple way? Please let me know what you think about this; it is indeed a strange coincidence that the son should have gone the way the father wished to go, as my 'Elegy' shows.* This perhaps deserves some sort of memorial . . .

575 To ULRIKE VON POGWISCH†

Weimar,
18th June 1831.

I should have written to you already, my very dear Ulrike, and thanked you for your dear little note, if I had had much else to say but what you know already—that our hearts have joined us one to the other long ago.

You know what may be happening here; but I shall talk first of all about the children‡ who at this moment are rampaging round me in the front rooms, making their existence felt twice or three times over.

Walther, who undoubtedly has some musical talent, seems to me to have been affected with sunstroke by the Leipzig *prima donna*. He composes arias he wants to hear her sing. Who knows what this may lead to. In the main, however, your mother's endeavours

* In the sixth of his *Roman Elegies*, full of the delight he felt at being in Rome, Goethe expresses the wish to 'be allowed to stay there until he is taken, past Cestius's monument, gently down to Hades'. Cestius's monument marks the beginning of the Protestant part of the Roman cemetery.

† Sister of Goethe's daughter-in-law, then in Carlsbad.

‡ Walther was then twelve, Wolfgang eleven and Alma four years old.

have decidedly and thoroughly benefited his piano playing; we must let the rest take its course and develop.

Little Wolf still sticks close to his grandfather, we have breakfast together, and so it goes on the whole day long. The theatre really carries away all these good creatures: he writes tragedies and comedies, collects theatre-bills, reads without end. It always seems to me that our children get their education in somersaults. What more is there to be said about it?

Wolf is clever like all children and people with an immediate aim. When I see what he is after, I amuse myself by sometimes hindering, sometimes forwarding his wishes, but he does not let this affect him in his progress in the least.

Our little girl is a darling and a real little woman, already now incalculable. She is on the best and fondest terms with her grandfather, and yet she goes on her usual way as if this were nothing. She is charming, for though strong-willed, she can be diverted and quietened. And never still for a moment, noisy but not irksome, soon brought back to reason and good behaviour by some fun.

Wolf, half jealous, has already noticed that she might usurp his role in a few years and coax a good deal out of her grandfather.

Here now, my dear, is a really grandfatherly letter for you; I should only like to add that one does not sufficiently value each day, hour and opportunity, or you would have brought Mlle Vavasour here oftener. Then the dear child would not have lacked entertainment. I hope your stay in Carlsbad together does you both a great deal of good.

I will leave all the rest unsaid as if it did not exist, and just send a thousand respectful greetings to Her Excellency Countess Henckle; I beg you will go on remembering me with all your old faithful feelings.

and so for ever

576 To ZELTER

*Weimar,
18th-19th June 1831.*

. . . But now I want to take you into entirely different country. I would like to tell you briefly how by our indiscriminate reading I have been dragged into the latest French fiction with its endless horrors. Let me sum it up; it is a literature of despair. These authors have to produce an instantaneous impression because one edition has to follow upon the other. So they force upon the reader

the opposite of what one ought to give him as a blessing, and in the end they reduce him to despair. It is their fiendish business to exaggerate whatever is ugly, repulsive, cruel, vile, all that is depraved, until the impossible is reached. It must indeed be called a 'business', for it is based on a profound study of past ages and former conditions, strange complications and incredible realities; such works cannot, therefore, be termed either empty or bad. And it is definitely gifted people who go in for this kind of thing; they are intelligent, outstanding men, who have reached middle-age and think that life has doomed them to occupy themselves with these abominations.

Your lively, cheerful letter has just come; do continue to delight me by writing.

577 To SORET

Weimar,
19th June 1831.

. . . I am returning with thanks the First Part of [Victor Hugo's] 'Notre Dame de Paris', but I dare not ask for the Second Part. Why should anybody wanting to preserve his natural sanity into his old age have anything to do with such abominations? . . .

578 To ZELTER

Weimar,
28th June 1831.

. . . A word about good Felix. It was a great mistake on the part of Papa [Mendelssohn] not to let him go to Sicily. It leaves the young man with a longing, and quite needlessly. My later letters from Sicily or the following ones from Naples must show some trace of the unpleasant impression this idolised island left on me; I don't want to stress the point by repetition.

Something else*; don't tell anyone: I wrote my poem 'The Wanderer' in 1771, many years before my journey to Italy. Poets have this advantage; they sense and appreciate things beforehand. Those who look for these things in the real world, love and enjoy them all the more when they find them in actual fact.

My present quiet occupation reminds me constantly of you; but

* This refers to a letter which Mendelssohn wrote to Zelter, saying that between Pozzuoli and Baja he had found the very place which Goethe must have had in mind when he described the scene of his poem *Der Wanderer*.

I have been led, too, to think about present-day France and so about the *Religion St. Simonienne*. There are very clever people at the head of this sect. They see the weak points of our age and they talk well about what is desirable; but when they presume to get rid of abuses and to bring about what is desirable they make no progress. The fools imagine they are clever enough to play the part of Providence. They assert that everyone will be rewarded according to his deserts if he goes with them heart and soul, neck or nothing. What man, what society could dare to speak like this? . . .

579 To AUGUST KESTNER

29th July 1831.

Let me thank you, my very dear Kestner, for your kind letter of 5th July, and answer some of it, leaving a good deal else for the next time.

The important facsimiles of your excellent collection * have reached me safely, and one can sincerely congratulate you on it. The detailed essay appended to it gives one such full information that at the first reading I have nothing further to add but that one's former experience is confirmed here too. On the one hand, most skilful and outstanding artists have concerned themselves with works like these, and on the other, brilliant men, though gifted with rather lesser talent have always shown and expressed themselves in a cheerful and meaningful way.

About the few things my son left behind him, I leave the sending of them entirely in your hands. If they are despatched to Mylius in Milan, I shall get them. Please convey my grateful thanks to Herr Platner.

And now about the monument. Let me confess how touched I felt when I heard of the thoughtful solicitude of kind friends in Rome and of Herr Thorwaldsen's offer to design and erect it as a gift to me. I can only accept his offer with the deepest gratitude, which I almost feel I ought not to express merely in words.

I agree entirely with the suggestion of fixing the height of the stone at 12 palms; the incurving line in the sketch shows very pleasing proportions. I enclose an inscription, which, I hope will also meet with approval from the experts there.†

* A collection of intaglios and cameos.

† The monument, showing August's portrait in a medallion, bears this inscription which Goethe had sent: Goethe Filius / Patri / antevergens / obiit / anno XL / MDCCCXXX.

My thanks and my apologies for the trouble you have taken about the Carracci picture. I possess an engraving by Podesta with the inscription: *after Hannibal Carracci*, and also a really outstanding pen-drawing with brown shading, really outstanding of its kind, and after which this engraving is obviously made. In the matter of this acquisition of such importance for the northern middleland and for me, it was most interesting to learn whether the picture representing the same subject in the Church of San Giacomo dei Spagnuoli and mentioned by several authors, was composed in a similar way. The picture in my possession would thereby gain higher worth and deserve the notice of connoisseurs. My best thanks then also for your news of the disappearance of this picture, which gives my two drawings a rarity-value, though I would willingly have forgone this advantage.

My best regards to Countess Julie if occasion arises. Our good Preller too continues to remember your interest with the greatest gratitude.

That is all for to-day, so that this letter may not be delayed; in a quiet hour, which I seem unlikely to have these days, I mean to add something more of note.

580 To THOMAS CARLYLE

Weimar,
19th August 1831.

... As soon as I received your most tasteful gift,* I sent a short poem of thanks to Mr Fraser in London for the group of these 'Fifteen English Friends'. And to you, my very dear Sir, I send a duplicate, which may reach you before the other through Mr Fraser.

Let me just add that I have already glanced at the books and journals that came also, and have found a great many interesting things in them. More about them next time. And some observations on silhouettes and how incredibly they bring the absent original before us.

You will already have, or will soon receive, the case despatched by Mr Parish from Hamburg at the end of June. Let me know what you think of the contents.

Let me say again briefly that the present these friends have given me has been a pleasure as great as it was unexpected, and not to me

* A seal; see introduction to this group of letters.

alone, but equally to friends and acquaintances who can appreciate such artistic work.

581 To ZELTER

Weimar,
4th September 1831.

I was away from Weimar for six days, the most glorious of the whole summer, and went to Ilmenau. I had worked a good deal for the place in former years, and there had been a long interval since I last was there. Up in the fir-woods, on the wall of a lonely wooden hut, I looked again at the poem I had scribbled there on 7th September 1783—the poem which your music has borne on its wings with such soothing charm into the wide world:

‘O’er all the hill-tops
Is quiet now . . . ’*

. . . If you want news of my ‘Faust’, here is some. The Second Part is rounded off too. I have known exactly what I wanted for years now, but I have always just finished isolated passages only that interested me at the time. So there were gaps to be filled in. I determined to get all this straight before my birthday. And I managed it. The whole thing lies before me now and I have only a few details to put right. Then I will seal it up, and it can increase the bulk of the coming volumes of my ‘Works’ whatever happens to them . . .

Now this duty is done, others are pressing in on its heels, like a queue at a baker’s. I know quite well what is wanted, the result must serve to show what is possible. I have planned far too many buildings and now in the end I lack means and strength to carry out these plans. I cannot bear to think of my play ‘Die natürliche Tochter’; how could I recall the vast events then impending? . . .

582 To FELIX MENDELSSOHN†

Weimar,
9th September 1831.

You gave me a great deal of pleasure, my dear son, with your first letter from Rome, and now that I have your second one from Lucerne I am all the more eager to thank you for it. A letter you

* Translated by Longfellow.

† In Munich.

wrote in between, from Milan, which Zelter tells me I should have had, has not reached me.

I sometimes reproach myself with being apt to theorise over points that interest me in family conversation and with others too. So I may have talked while you were here about the weather and its regularities and irregularities. Doing so has turned out to my great advantage this time, for as soon as you gave your attention to these phenomena, you were bound to seize their characteristics. And now you have had the opportunity to see what people are so rarely able to see, and have preserved for us a really important description of these stupendous and violent workings of nature.

I am so glad about your peaceful stay [in the Monastery] at Engelberg, a place I have never seen. How very pleasant to find an organ worth playing on in such a remote place and it is no small thing at once to have at one's disposal a language that awakes and raises the spirits of these strange people, strangers to the world . . .

It is a great pleasure to me to hear you have made my 'First Walpurgisnacht' so thoroughly your own. For no one, not even our good Zelter, has been able to make anything of this work. It is intended to have a deeply symbolic significance . . . I do not doubt you will have given life and meaning to it all, and I look forward to the pleasure of enjoying it.

I am unwilling to delay this letter any longer, so I shall stop, wishing you happy days in Munich. I do not know what your own family suggests, but I would advise you to remain in the south for some time yet. At the approach of that invisible monster, [the cholera], everyone seems to get distracted if not mad with fear, and short of isolating oneself completely, one is hourly laid open to be influenced by this.

Farewell. Come back whenever it may be, in a happy hour; you are most welcome at any.

583 To C. L. F. SCHULTZ*

Weimar,
18th September 1831.

My honoured and faithful friend, let me answer your valued, important letter in this way.

In the square in front of my house there is a large handsome stone-basin, adequately fed by a pipe through which the water

* Who had referred to some letters between Goethe and Schiller about the symbolical meaning of objects observed.

flows with some force. Women, young girls, servants, apprentices and children come to it, particularly in the mornings and evenings, and fetch this necessary ingredient of their existence.

The task is simple, and yet the movements are many. The water is taken from the basin, poured into tubs and carried away on the back for cleaning purposes. Jugs for drinking-water are held to the pipe, and buckets for cooking and other more particular uses are filled from it. As this goes on, those at work or waiting never look exactly the same; there is endless variety of gesture, there is not a trace of impatience in the attitudes of those actually getting the water and those awaiting the moment when it will be their turn. It is all done rhythmically and yet with subtle differences noticeable between the movements of one group and another. It is now strictly forbidden by law to wash lettuces on the spot. Rather a pity! For this practice led to very charming homely attitudes. Yet there is still enough to see. There are some who come early, singly, then the crowds in the middle of the day, and so on till at length it all stands deserted again. Perhaps only a boy remains, steps up to the edge of the basin and from there to the pillar, to lean over the pipe and enjoy drinking straight from it.

All this would give the artist a chance to show what he can see, seize, choose and render. Here he can study one of man's necessary indispensable actions in all its momentary stages, each of them significant, and often also very apt, beautiful, graceful and full of meaning and art. It is one of the thousand instances showing clearly that no living work of art can be produced without a direct fusion of subject and object.

I have to thank critical and idealistic philosophy for making me conscious of what goes on in myself, and that is a great gain. But philosophy never reaches the object; but we, like anyone with ordinary common sense, have to admit its existence and to hold faithfully to it if we are to enjoy what life has to offer.

I hope what I have hastily noted here will greet you, my honoured friend, on your safe arrival in Bonn, and cause you to give me the pleasure of hearing from time to time about your circumstances and some of your interesting ideas. I still have not answered everything in your first letter that led to this one of mine, and I should be very happy to communicate a good many things to you . . .

Weimar,
31st October 1831.

. . . Rather a handsome young man, a Prussian, called the other day; after quite a polite conversation he confided to me that he too professed poetry. He added that he was trying to work against me and my followers. I assured him that that was a very good thing to do; people very rarely think alike, so what could be more natural than for them to express themselves differently in verse and prose?

As for tragedy, it is a ticklish affair; I am not born to be a tragic poet, for I am tolerant by nature. So a case of pure tragedy cannot interest me, because for this there should be no forgiveness, and it seems quite absurd to me that there could be anything unforgivable in this otherwise superficial world . . .

585 To CHANCELLOR FRIEDRICH VON MÜLLER

Weimar,
17th November 1831.

. . . Blasé is too mild a word for [Balzac's] 'Peau de Chagrin'. This work by an author of very outstanding intellect points to a fundamental and incurable corruption in the [French] nation. This will spread further and further, unless the administrators of the provinces who now seem unable to read and write should become capable again of educating the people.

I wish you happiness and everything good on these dark days.

586 To B. R. HAYDON* (Written in English)

1st December 1831.

. . . Most gladly will I add my name to the List of Subscribers to your valuable painting, and I shall give directions to my banker here to forward to you the amount of my ticket through the hands of his correspondent in London, Messrs Coutts & Co.

Reserving to myself the liberty of asking, at a future period, for further information as well about the matter in question and the picture that is to be raffled for, as concerning other objects of art, I beg to conclude the present letter by recommending myself to your friendly remembrance.

* Who years before had sent Goethe drawings of the Elgin Marbles.

Weimar,
5th January 1832.

I too, alas, must begin this letter of mine by expressing my profound regret at a loss though it came not quite unexpected—that of this highly gifted, eminent leader, this man of such learning and so many activities. The basis of his teaching lay outside my more immediate interests, but I have always derived a real spiritual advantage from it, whenever what he did touched on my endeavours or when he sometimes even took an active interest in them . . .

Weimar,
13th January 1832.

I must at least catch at the Old Year's mantle as he passes, to send a hasty greeting to my very dear friends.

I was extremely sorry to hear you were ill during part of these last few months, for I love to remember your gay and charming kindness filling each moment happily.

It is as if we had awakened from some horrible dream here. That Asiatic monster, [the cholera], seemed to unfold fresh necks, heads and jaws as it drew nearer. We were quite right to make frightful preparations against it to balance our fright. Here on this road to everywhere, anxious and alarmed travellers fleeing from it kept us in dread of an evil, which now at last has been reduced in the most admirable way and almost extinguished in the North. We get no more letters and parcels with holes bored through them, all the restrictions are at an end and we live tranquilly on now without the slightest hint of it all. Now that it has passed off in this way reasonably well, the doctors who declared it was not contagious begin to triumph, in spite of the fact that it did spread by contagion. Let us trust to the friendly influences in the spring-air to ward off the monster's return. Otherwise the panic agitation may start again and get hold of people; and this fear which no one escapes is greater even than the evil itself to which after all only some succumb.

You well know that my truest hopes and my genuine interest are with you always; I am really worried about your excellent husband. The restrictions of age must of course be intensely irksome for anyone so active in mind and body. I won't deny, I consider it quite

* About Hegel, who as a volunteer had met his death nursing cholera victims during an epidemic.

a feat of skill to look upon what the years take from us as superfluous, and to prize all the more what they leave us. We ought to be especially thankful when they are polite enough to please us with new gifts, though even good people barely notice them and seldom receive them gratefully.

My dear, I wonder, would you be so kind as to give me some help for my table and household now in winter as you did last summer? No doubt you would be amused to see how methodically I have to attend myself to these details now. I would like to ask you before long to send me some things to draw special smiles from my guests. In the meantime if you want my grandchildren to look with approval at me, please send me some Offenbach ginger-bread sometime in February; they will probably have eaten up all those dangerous Christmas gifts by then. I notice the confectioners always keep pace with whatever strides mankind makes towards its loftiest goal; mind and heart get more and more purified, but I fear at the same time the digestion is brought nearer and nearer to its ruin.

And now this long-lingering note must start on its journey. In haste—but constant.

589 To H. W. F. WACKENRODER* 21st January 1832.

I am truly indebted to you, my dear Sir, for what you have sent and written to me on several occasions, and I must delay no longer in expressing my gratitude, however inadequately.

Let me pause over this and stop meanwhile at the chemistry of plants. I find it extremely interesting to see how the chemical principles of living organisms might be discovered, principles which achieve the metamorphosis of plants in the most varied manner, but always according to the self-same law . . .

We are willing to grant nature her secret *encheiresis*, creating and stimulating life, and though we are no mystics, we have in the end to acknowledge something inexplicable. And yet, if he is in earnest, man cannot cease trying to reduce the area of the inexplicable till he has to declare himself satisfied and willingly admits his defeat.

Do continue to give me news of what is interesting to you, it is sure to meet my own reflections at some point. And I think myself very lucky in my old age not to be obliged to oppose the most recent findings of the sciences . . .

* Professor at the University of Jena.

Weimar,
10th February 1832.

I am sending another letter on the heels of my last one to make good some omissions. Above all, thanks for the 'Cauponarius'.* Surely every admirer of a well-balanced and careful style must enjoy this model example. It is no easy thing to state so clearly and to commend so insistently the multifarious things this man promises. What he says, however absurd, must have some attraction for people who hanker after that kind of thing. But now I want to add a serious confession.

I am using the time still granted to me earnestly sifting and disposing of the endless papers that have accumulated round me. As I do this, there are pages which seem to greet me and to lead me back to the happiest days of my life. Some of these I have always kept apart, and now they are parcelled up and sealed.

One of these parcels lies here before me, addressed to you, and I should like to forestall any accident by sending it off now. I only beg you to promise to keep it unopened until an indefinite date. Pages like these give us the happy feeling that we have lived; they are the best documents on which our thought can rest . . .

You, too, like myself, try to make use of each day and to add beauty to it, at once meeting suffering with action. Your warm affection remains like mine unchanged. Do write more often; in a correspondence that is to last, you need not wait your turn; send another page to urge mine on when I delay.

Weimar,
20th February 1832.

I am returning with many thanks the manuscript [of Jouy's libretto for the 'Women of Athens'] which you so kindly lent me. I have nothing to add but to congratulate these two excellent men, poet and composer, on such a promising subject. Treated poetically and dramatically it gives an excellent opportunity to transform it with the help of music into a splendid whole.

I hope the observations noted on the enclosed pages will at least prove that I have tried to grasp the structure of the work, leaving open to these eminent men to pay more or less attention to what I

* This was an innkeeper's advertisement for a charm against cholera, effective if taken (and paid for) with his wine.

† The composer, then in Berlin.

have written. They will best know their own public, what it looks for and demands and also what can be expected of it.

I surely need offer no excuses for writing in my own language; a gifted translator will lend more interest to my words than I could hope to attain through the use of a foreign language. Let me add that the manuscript you entrusted to me will follow by the next post.

In the fervent hope of your esteemed remembrance, with sincere regards.

592 To C. D. RAUCH*

20th February 1832.

. . . I have recently sent Herr Beuth a suggestion† that comes so close to your art that your co-operation is essential. If Herr Tieck were to interest himself in it too, and if Herr Beuth found it worth his attention, and if you saw it as I do, as a matter that concerns the whole world, a great deal would be gained. One can at least tell oneself that, however much or little is done, it will do good and lead to more. I have made my own feelings and convictions about the importance of this undertaking plain and so I can surely hope to evoke a similar interest. But wherever I look I see no hope of success except in Berlin, where everything needed is at hand; it is only a question of its combining and acting together.

I cannot help saying I sometimes have a strange feeling about this, for I find myself almost for the first time being a propagandist for something. I have hitherto been accustomed to record my convictions and let them speak for themselves; but this time I am anxious to see them acted upon in my lifetime. It seems that old age grows impatient, while youth has time and to spare.

* The sculptor in Berlin.

† Goethe suggested that plastic models be made to be used for the study of anatomy; he hoped that this might discourage the resurrection-men of whose nefarious activities in London and Edinburgh he had read. He also wrote an essay on it, called *Plastic Anatomy*.

Weimar,
10th March 1832.

To-day, 6th March, I received your kind letter of the 18th February, my very good friend; and this lets me hope you can hear from me by the end of the month. So I am hastening to say that what you have sent has given me enormous pleasure.

I must confess I could hardly convince myself and believe that this flattering dedication will be preserved and that my name will be used there for a meeting place of friends. How deeply grateful I feel therefore that my worthy countrymen and the authorities in Pompeii have been pleased to give this lasting and living expression to their estimable feelings.

But how strangely events had to come together! It was written in the stars (I use this metaphor to refer to a happening for which there is no word) that my son, the cause of so much joy, anxiety and hope to me, should meet and gain so many sympathetic friends on his parabolic course through Italy before reaching his goal near the Pyramid of Cestius. And it was ordained that through a unique concurrence of many separate events he should help to raise the worthiest of memorials to his father in return for all his loving care, his constant solicitude, his considerable sacrifices.

I am fully aware that we owe this joy to your influence; and I recognise in this, as always, not only your indefatigable practical energy, but your constancy in kindness to those whom you have honoured with a firm affection . . .

A great deal could be said about the building itself of which you have so thoughtfully sent a plan. But by far the most important is your remark about its deviation from strict symmetry. This seems to me like modulations in music; one cannot call them discords for they lead on to a beauty otherwise unattainable, and satisfy us in the most delightful manner.

Though it is only natural, I cannot refrain from saying, indeed repeatedly, that in my old age it gives me a feeling of heartfelt gratification to see the younger generation not only approving of what I have done in my day, but also feeling that the way which I have followed without swerving is also that along which they will succeed . . .

* An archeologist in Naples, who had sent a description of the opening of the 'Casa di Goethe' in a recently excavated Roman house in Pompeii; August von Goethe had been present at the ceremony on 7th October 1830.

If Sir Walter Scott should still be staying near you, please [thank him for his message and] assure him that he would find himself perfectly at home here with us, not only as the author of so many works of importance but also as a man full of kind and noble thoughts and devoted to furthering knowledge. And I may say that for me this general esteem is increased by a tender feeling that comes from a kinship I have felt for many years.

My good daughter who sends kindest and most friendly greetings would like you, if you have occasion, to convey her best respects to Sir Walter Scott's unmarried daughter who we hear is accompanying her father; she will be made most truly welcome by my daughter . . .

594 To COUNT STERNBERG

Weimar,
15th March 1832.

I should long since have written down the mental conversations I have been holding with you, my honoured friend, but that I wanted and meant to give an account of something that seems to me of importance. This cannot altogether be done in words, so perhaps a little sketch I am having made of a fossil may be successful . . .

Like everyone else we have been inconsistent in our attitude to that Asiatic monster, the cholera. First we were full of anxiety, preventative measures, cures, listening, reading and thinking, most active. These efforts ended in indifference and we live on now as before, utterly carefree, each in his own way, trusting to the height of our hills preventing its approach. It has not yet got nearer than twelve hours' distance from here. So I hope you, my good friend, on your still higher heights are safe from it. This will of course make it doubtful for some time if such large numbers of scientists can assemble in Vienna. And that is a great pity.

The new numbers of the 'Bohemian Journal' have made me want once more to visit again that greatly loved kingdom, where I found pleasure and instruction during so many years, and still would have every reason to visit those districts with their welcoming charm. I know something in general of the former history of the kingdom and many places more precisely. That makes welcome to me everything that explains some detail and gives me a clear idea of the

recent progress in any branch of administration, the sciences and the arts.

The catalogue of that most important collection of engravings led me to ask myself what I had already learnt by seeing examples of this art myself . . .

The country round here has lately yielded a number of interesting specimens of fossils. In the layer of tufa near Weimar we found a very well preserved elephant's tusk, seven feet in length. And in the gravel pit about an hour's journey down the Ilm we got some fully formed elephant molars of 14 to 16 pounds weight. A more remarkable find I thought was a small molar belonging to a young piglet-elephant, if I may use this expression; it illustrates the principles of dentition wonderfully well.

We hope now through the kindness of Baron Cuvier to get coloured plaster casts of the most important prehistoric fossil-remains which this eminent scientist has discovered and described. We are continuing our collection, within the narrow range of our opportunities here. And we are quite convinced that, provided the few things one has are methodically arranged, it is not necessary to have a great deal, in order to gain the first fundamental knowledge. As I have said, the *flora subterranea* is carefully observed here. When summer comes, too, I shall have the half-sad pleasure of arranging the collection of fossils which belonged to my son; he was made so happy, my dear Sir, by your friendly goodness in helping him with it.

In this long-delayed account I must remember to say that I have had some most friendly help towards an orographic history of the Freyberg-district, though this history may never be quite explained. A representative collection here of the best geological specimens has been occupying me for almost a year now. I seem to be helped on further by a dim gleam of comprehension which I have long been following—rather as one rides on a dark night towards a distant light hoping it does not turn out to be a will-o'-the wisp. The strangest thing about it is that the best part of our convictions cannot be put into words. Language is not suited to every purpose, and we often do not fully know whether we are really seeing, perceiving, thinking, remembering, imagining or believing. That is what often depresses me, especially as at present I cannot get the help of any discussion on this subject.

I hope you will receive the continuation of this, too, in a kindly spirit . . .

After a long involuntary pause I am beginning like this, and yet simply impromptu. The Ancients said that the animals are taught through their organs; let me add to this, so are men, but they have the advantage of teaching their organs in return.

Every action, and so every talent, needs some inborn faculty which acts naturally, and unconsciously carries with it the necessary aptitude, and which, therefore, continues to act in such a way that though its law is implicit in it, its course in the end may be aimless and purposeless.

The earlier man becomes aware that there exists some craft, some art that can help him towards a controlled heightening of his natural abilities, the happier he is; whatever he may receive from without does not harm his innate individuality. The best genius is that which absorbs everything within itself, knows how to appropriate everything, without this in the least impairing its fundamental dispositions, called its character, but rather enhancing and furthering them throughout as much as possible.

Here begin the manifold relations between the conscious and the unconscious. Take for instance a talented musician, composing an important score; consciousness and unconsciousness will be like warp and weft, a simile I am fond of using.

Through practice, teaching, reflection, success, failure, furtherance and resistance, and again and again reflection, man's organs unconsciously and in a free activity link what he acquires with his innate gifts, so that a unity results which leaves the world amazed.

These general remarks may serve as a rapid answer to your question, and as an explanation to the note I return herewith.

For more than sixty years the conception of *Faust* has lain here before my mind with the clearness of youth, though the sequence with less fulness. I have let the idea go quietly along with me through life and have only worked out the scenes that interested me most from time to time. So in the Second Part gaps remained, waiting for this kind of interest before they could be joined to the rest. It was difficult to do through conscious effort and strength of personality something that really should have been the spontaneous

* Whom Goethe had told that he had recently completed his *Faust* and that this had required a more conscious effort than he had made before in writing that poem. Humboldt, in reply, asked for further explanation of this conscious creative process.

work of active nature. But it surely would not be right if this were not possible after my long life of thought and action, and I am not afraid of people being able to pick out the new from the old, the later from the earlier work. We can leave that to future readers.

It would naturally be an infinite joy to me if during my lifetime, too, I could dedicate these serious phantasies to my valued friends everywhere. I have always been grateful for their interest and should like to hear their response. But the present age is so senseless and confused that I know I should only be poorly rewarded for my many years of sincere effort at erecting this strange building. It would be driven like a wrack on the shore and lie there, getting gradually covered by the sands of time. The world is ruled to-day by bewildering wrong counsel, urging bewildered wrong action. My most important task is to go on developing as much as possible whatever is and remains in me, distilling my own particular abilities again and again. You, my friend, are doing the same up there in your castle.

Tell me about your work, too; as you know, Riemer is still busy on the same sort of studies as we are, and our evening conversations often touch on these subjects. Forgive this long delayed letter. In spite of my retirement, there is seldom a time when I am in the mood to remind myself of those mysteries of life.

Ever Yours.

Two days after he had written this letter, on 19th March, Goethe developed a pain in the chest and his breathing became difficult. On the 22nd, shortly after mid-day, he died.

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- BONPLAND, Aimée J. A. (Goujand), 1773–1858, French naturalist, mainly botanist, joined Alexander v. Humboldt in his travels through South America, 374
- BOSSI, Giuseppe, 1777–1816, Italian artist and art historian, 456
- BOURRIENNE, Louis, A. F. de, 1769–1834, French diplomatist, private Secretary of Napoleon, published his *Memoires*, 553
- BOUTERWEK, F., 1766–1828, Professor of Philosophy in Göttingen, 275
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- BRENTANO, Clemens, 1778–1842, son of Goethe's early friend Maximiliane Brentano, née La Roche; poet and novelist of the Romantic School; co-editor with Achim v. Arnim, his brother-in-law, of the collection of German folksongs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, 329
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- BREVILLIER, Fraulein, friend of Goethe's sister, 1
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- BRION, Friederike Elisabeth, 1751(1752)–1813, daughter of pastor J. J. Brion in Sesenheim nr. Strassburg, 9, 100
- BRÜHL, Countess Christine, née Schleierweber, born 1756, met Goethe in Weimar 1782 and again in Carlsbad, mother of *infra*, 174
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- BRUNELLESCHI, Filippo, 1379–1446, Florentine architect, of the Cupola of the Cathedral of Florence, etc., 258

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- BUCH, Christian, Baron, 1774–1833, geologist, especially of volcanic action, 483
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- BUERGER, Gottfried August, 1748–1794, Storm-and-Stress poet, best known through his ballads, especially *Lenore*; latterly a lecturer at Göttingen University, 28
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- BUFF, Caroline, born 1751, sister of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 17, 34
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- BUFF, Ernst, born 1767, youngest brother of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 16, 19
- BUFF, Hans, 1757–1830, eldest brother of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 19, 21, 27, 32
- BUFF, Helene (Lenchen), born 1756, sister of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 20, 23, 34
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- BURGSTALL (PURGSTALL), Count G. W., 1773–1812, 1793 student at Jena University, later leader in wars against Napoleon in Austria, 289
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- CALDERON DE LA BARCA, Pedro, 1600–1681, Spanish poet and dramatist, 380, 410, 477, 550
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- CARLYLE, Thomas, 1795–1881, his works on German literature: 1823–4 *Life of Schiller*; 1824 *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (a translation of Goethe's novel); 1827 *German Romance*; *Jean Paul Friedrich Richter*; *State of German Literature*; 1828 *Werner*; *Goethe's Helena*; *Goethe*; *Heyne*; 1829 *German Playwrights*; *Novalis*; 1830 *Jean Paul's Review of Mme de Staël's Allemagne*; *Jean Paul Friedrich Richter* (again); 1831 *Luther's Psalm*; *Schiller*; *The Nibelungen Lied*; *German Literature of the XIV and XV Centuries*; *Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry*; 1832 *Goethe's Portrait*; *Schiller*, *Goethe and Mme de Staël*; *Death of Goethe*; *Goethe's Works*; *The Tale* (*Das Märchen*); *Novelle*; 506, 530, 533, 539, 541, 551, 557, 580
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- CHASSEPOT, Comtesse Dorothea de, née v. Knabenau, met Goethe in Carlsbad and Teplitz; 1829 living in Paris, 549, 559
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- CLODIUS, C. A., 1738–1784, author and Professor of Philosophy and Poetics in Leipzig, 3
- COGSWELL, J. G., 1796–1871, scientist in Baltimore; 1818 and 1819 in Weimar, 459, 466
- CONDÉ, Prince Louis J. de, 1736–1818, a French emigrant during the Revolution, leading an army corps against the French, 264
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- COOK, Captain James, 1728–1779, navigator, killed by the inhabitants of Owaihei in the South Seas where for some time he had been revered as a god, 135, 295
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- CUVIER, Baron Georges F. L. D., 1769–1852, great French naturalist, specialising in taxonomy, comparative anatomy and palaeontology, 534, 571, 594
- DALBERG, Carl Theodor v., 1744–1817, Governor of Erfurt 1772, Co-adjutor to the Archbishop of Mainz 1787, Archbishop and Elector of Mainz and Arch-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Empire 1802. He worked, partly in conjunction with Carl August, towards the estab-

- lishment of some kind of confederation of the German states to take the place of the old and failing Empire. When this proved impossible, he turned to Napoleon as the sole force strong enough to prevent the dissolution of Germany. He became Prince-Primate of the Napoleonic Confederation of the Rhine, Grand Duke of Frankfort in 1810. After the fall of Napoleon he remained only Archbishop of Regensburg, 56, 106, 109, 205, 226, 264, 343
- D'ALTON, Eduard J., 1772–1840, anatomist, engraver, Professor of Archaeology in Bonn, 487, 489, 500
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- DESCAMPS, J. B., 1711–1791, art historian, author of *Vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandais* and of *Voyage pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant*, 431
- DESSAU, Prince Leopold of, 1740–1817, called *Der alte Dessauer*, 144, 149
- DESTORP, J. M., 1749–1824, fellow student of G. F. Buerger, later mayor of Lübeck, 28
- DES VŒUX, Charles, died 1832, in the British Diplomatic Service, translator of Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, 529
- DIDEROT, Denis, 1713–1784, French encyclopaedist, 497
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- DUMONT, Lottery collector, 483
- DÜSSEK, Johann R., 1761–1812, musician, 460
- ECKERMANN, Johann Peter, 1792–1854, came to Weimar in 1823 and became Goethe's secretary soon afterwards. After Goethe's death he

- continued together with Chancellor Müller the publication of Goethe's works. He published *Gespräche mit Goethe*, a faithful rendering of Goethe's conversations during ten years, 541, 558, 561, 564, 570
- ECKHART, Johannes, L., from 1783 Professor in Jena, 130
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- EICHHORN, J. C., 1752–1867, Professor of Oriental languages in Jena, 180, 275
- EICHSTÄDT, H. C. A., 1772–1848, Professor of Philology in Jena, editor of the *Neue Litteratur Zeitung* in Jena, 358, 366
- EINSIEDEL, F. H. v., 1750–1828, an early friend of Carl August's, Chamberlain, wrote occasional verse, 55, 82, 216, 218, 456
- EKEBRECHT, a decorator in Weimar, 257
- ERICHSON, J., 1777–1856, student at Jena University, later Professor of Aesthetics and Rhetoric in Erlangen, 278
- ERSCH, Dr, 1766–1828, Professor and librarian at Jena University, 342
- EYBENBERG, Marianne v., née Meyer, died 1812, morganatic wife of Prince Heinrich of Reuss, Austrian ambassador in Berlin; lived from 1799 as a widow in Vienna, 346, 384
- EYCK, Hubert and Jan van, 1366–1426 and 1386–1440 respectively, Flemish artists, 430, 431
- FÄRBER, J. J., mineralogist in Berlin, author of a book on his travels in Italy, 194
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- FALK, J., 1768–1826, philanthropist in Weimar, 462
- FAUJAS DE ST. FOND, 1741–1819, French geologist, 132
- FETTMILCH, a baker in Frankfort, executed 1616 as a rebel, 48
- FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb, 1762–1814, Professor of Philosophy in Jena 1794–1798, had to leave there owing to a charge of atheism, and lived then in Berlin. Published (1794) *Wissenschaftslehre* which had great influence on the writers of the Romantic School. His *Reden an die deutsche Nation* greatly contributed to the awakening of German patriotism against Napoleon, 240, 241, 317, 320
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- FIKENTSCHER, W. K., 1770–1837, apothecary and chemist, owned a factory in Redwitz in Bavaria, 484
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- FRITSCH, Baron J. F., 1731–1814, 1772–1800 President of the Privy Council in Weimar, 423
- FROMANN, F. J., 1797–1886, publisher and bookseller in Jena, 329, 330, 366, 561
- FUCHS, J. F., 1765–1837, Professor of Anatomy in Jena, 366, 371
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- FUSELI, Henry, 1741–1825, Swiss artist, lived mainly in London, 48, 105
- GALLITZIN, Princess Amalie, 1748–1806, prominent member of a religious and philosophical group in Münster in Westphalia, 172, 222
- GARRICK, David, 1716–1779, 351
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- GASSNER, J. J., 1727–1779, a doctor, 471
- GELLERT, Christian Fürchtegott, 1715–1769, Professor of Poetics and Philosophy in Leipzig, author of various plays and a novel, now best known by his Fables, 3
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- GERSDORFF, Baron E. C. A., 1781–1852, Minister in Weimar, in 1830 chief of August v. Goethe, 567
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- GLUCK, Christoph W., 1714–1787, musician and composer, 563
- GOECHAUSEN, Louise v., 1747–1807, lady-in-waiting of the Dowager Duchess Anna Amalia, 112, 246
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- GOESCHEN, George J., 1750–1828, publisher, author of a novel called *Johanns Reise*, 256, 548
- GOETHE, Alma v., 1827–1844, youngest child of August and Ottilie v. Goethe, 564, 565, 567, 569, 570, 571, 575, 588
- GOETHE, August v., 25th December 1789–27th October 1830, Goethe's son, 225, 227, 229, 230, 232, 236, 241, 247, 249, 266, 267, 279, 288, 291, 322, 328, 349, 361, 372, 373, 376, 377, 379, 383, 384, 390, 395, 400, 420, 426, 430, 431, 448, 467, 468, 469, 473, 477, 480, 483, 495, 500, 509, 529, 558, 561, 564, 565, 566, 567, 570, 571, 574, 579, 593, 594
- GOETHE, Catharina Elisabeth, 19th February 1731–13th September 1808, Goethe's mother. Daughter of Johann Wolfgang Textor, Stadtschultheiss of Frankfort, married to Johann Caspar Goethe in 1748. Only her two eldest children, Johann Wolfgang, born 1749, and Cornelia, born 1750, grew up. A greater number of her letters to her son has been preserved than of his to her; and her letters make it clear that though he did not write very frequently, he wrote much more often than his existing letters show, 3, 34, 48, 53, 57, 72, 76, 81, 89, 96, 97, 115, 131, 132, 148, 159, 175, 176, 192, 202, 214, 228, 232, 234, 236, 264, 288, 361, 373, 377, 386, 401, 433, 499, 524, 546

- GOETHE, Christiane S. v., 6th June 1764–6th June 1816, née Vulpius, Goethe's wife. Met Goethe 12th June 1788 when she presented him an application for a post by her brother; moved into his house soon afterwards; married 19th October 1806. Of her five children only August, the eldest son, grew up, all others died soon after birth, 213, 214, 218, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 236, 247, 249, 267, 279, 288, 291, 322, 328, 345, 349, 365, 368, 370, 372, 373, 379, 383, 384, 387, 390, 393, 395, 412, 419, 423, 426, 430, 431, 436, 442
- GOETHE, Cornelia—see Schlosser
- GOETHE, Johann Caspar, 1710–1782, Goethe's father; held the title *Kaiserlicher Rat* (Imperial Councillor), 2, 18, 48, 50, 53, 60, 72, 76, 96, 131, 185, 192, 416, 546
- GOETHE, Ottilie v., 1796–1872, née v. Pogwisch. She was the daughter of a Prussian Major; her grandmother, Countess Henckel-Donnersmarck, was a lady-in-waiting in Weimar. Married August v. Goethe on 17th June 1817; three children: Walter, born 1818, Wolfgang, born 1820 and Alma, born 1827. While her married life was not happy, she proved a good and affectionate daughter-in-law to Goethe and a perfect hostess to his house both while married to his son as well as after her husband's death. She left Weimar soon after Goethe had died; without settling down anywhere she spent some years in Vienna where her daughter died, and returned to live with her sons on the top floor of Goethe's house for the last two years of her life, 451, 462, 469, 473, 477, 480, 492, 495, 499, 511, 529, 541, 542, 543, 556, 557, 561, 563, 564, 565, 567, 570, 571, 593
- GOETHE, Walter Wolfgang v., 1818–1883, Goethe's eldest grandson; musician; like his brother unable to make any success of his life, 565, 567, 569, 570, 571, 575, 588
- GOETHE, Wolfgang Maximilian v., 1820–1883, Goethe's second grandson, official in Weimar, 473, 511, 565, 567, 569, 570, 571, 575, 588
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- GOLDSMITH, Oliver, 1728–1774, the passage in Goethe's letter of 14th September 1780 is a quotation from Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, 120
- GOTTER, Friedrich Wilhelm, 1746–1797, lawyer, poet and translator; 1772 in Wetzlar, later in Gotha, 17, 34
- GOWER, Lord Francis Leveson, 1st Earl of Ellesmere, 1800–1857, translated Goethe's *Faust* 1823, 511
- GRADL, J. W., 1788–1825, Canon, in charge of the hot springs of Marienbad, 484
- GRIES, J. D., 1775–1842, lawyer in Jena, author, translator mainly of Calderon, 329, 477, 550
- GRIESBACH, Johann J., 1745–1812, Professor of Theology in Jena, 180, 366
- GRIMM, Friedrich Melchior, Baron von, 1723–1807, author and diplomat in Paris, 131
- GRIMM, Jacob, 1785–1863, and GRIMM, Wilhelm, 1786–1859, founders of German philology, published *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (a collection of old fairy tales), *Deutsche Sagen* (a collection of legends) as well as various translations and philological works; Jacob: 392, 404; Wilhelm: 392, 404

- GROTTHUS, Sara v., née Meyer, died 1828, sister of Frau v. Eybenberg, met Goethe 1795; she lived successively in Britain, Vienna, Dresden and Oranienburg (1813 in Dresden), 425
- GRÜNER, J. S., 1780–1864, Police Officer in Eger in Bohemia, interested in mineralogy and geology, 474, 484, 492
- GUAITO, Meline, 1788–1861, née Brentano, younger daughter of Maximiliane Brentano, 379
- GUIBERT (Guilbert), Comte Jacques A. H. de, 1743–1790, French general, author of *Essai général de tactique*, 63
- GUNTHER, W. C., died 1828, Court Chaplain in Weimar, 565
- GUESFELD (Güssfeld), F. L., forester and engineer, 178
- HACKERT, Philipp, 1737–1807, German artist in Italy; Goethe wrote his biography, 374
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- HAYDON, Benjamin R., 1786–1846, English artist; one of the early enthusiasts for the Elgin marbles, acquired for the British Museum in 1816, 461, 586
- HEAVYSIDE, J., tutor to the Hopes, young Englishmen staying in Weimar for their education, 539
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- HEGEL, G. W. Friedrich, 1770–1831, philosopher, lecturer at Jena University 1801–1808, 366, 453, 537, 538, 587
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- HENSEL, Fanny, 1805–1847, née Mendelssohn, musician, sister of Felix Mendelssohn, 481, 514
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- HERDER, August, 1776–1838, son of Johann Gottfried Herder; 1797, student at the Mining Academy in Freiberg in Saxony; later Director of the Academy, 251
- HERDER, Caroline, 1750–1809, née Flachsland, wife of Johann Gottfried Herder, 14, 17, 18, 42, 54, 56, 168, 197, 210, 213, 251
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- HERDER, Johann Gottfried, 1744–1805, ordained pastor 1767; met Goethe in Strassburg; *General Superintendent* (Chief of the Clergy) in Weimar 1776; married Caroline Flachsland in 1773. Author of theological, philosophical and literary works; among them: *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769*, *Essays on Shakespeare*, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (a collection of folksongs of various countries), *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind), 12, 14, 18, 39, 42, 54, 56, 57, 66, 98, 105, 113, 121, 152, 162, 167, 168, 172, 182, 183, 197, 202, 203, 207, 210, 213, 214, 218, 228, 245, 251, 445
- HERRMANN, C. G., born 1743, 1767 a young law-graduate in Leipzig, later mayor of Leipzig, 4
- HERSCHEL, Sir F. W., 1738–1822, English astronomer, discoverer of Uranus and inventor of an early giant telescope, etc., 338
- HESIOD, about 700 B.C., Greek epic poet, 388
- HEUSINGER, C. F., Professor of Medicine in Jena, 500
- HEYGENDORFF, Caroline v., 1777–1848, née Jagemann; actress in Weimar, mistress of Carl August; their son Carl Wolfgang was born 1806, 373
- HEYNE, Christian G., 1729–1812, Professor of classical philology at Göttingen University, 207
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- HIRT, A. L., 1759–1837, art-historian and archaeologist in Rome, 210, 256, 374
- HÖPFNER, L. J. F., 1743–1797, Professor of Jurisprudence in Giessen, later judge in Darmstadt, 132
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- HOFFMANN, Ernst T. A., 1776–1822, novelist of the Romantic School, 482, 533
- HOFMAN, A. J., 1753–1849, President of the revolutionary Clubbists in Mainz 1793, 238
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- HOLBERG, Ludvig, Baron, 1684–1754, the greatest Danish writer and comic dramatist, born in Norway; author of *Bramarbas or the Boastful Officer*, a comedy translated into German by Gottsched, 1
- HOLCROFT, Thomas, 1745–1809, translated Goethe's *Herrmann und Dorothea* 1802, 339
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- HOPE, name of an English family whose young sons were staying with their tutor in Weimar, 539
- HORACE, 65–8 B.C., 1, 14
- HORN, J. A., 1750–1806, a Frankfort friend of Goethe's and then his fellow student in Leipzig; later a teacher in Frankfort, 3, 4, 6, 14
- HOWARD, Luke, 1772–1864, English chemist, botanist and meteorologist, 572
- HUFELAND, Friedrich, 1774–1839, Professor of Medicine in Jena, 454
- HUFELAND, Gottlieb, 1760–1817, Professor of Jurisprudence in Jena, 242, 343
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- HUMBOLDT, F. H. Alexander, v., 1769–1859, naturalist. He put the sciences of physical geography and meteorology on a broader basis; made a scientific expedition to Spanish America 1799–1804. Among his works: *Relation historique du voyage aux régions équinoxiales du Nouveau Continent*, 1807–17, 254, 273, 274, 276, 374, 537
- HUMBOLDT, Caroline v., née v. Dacheröden, 1766–1829, wife of Wilhelm v. Humboldt, 430, 431
- HUMBOLDT, Karl Wilhelm v., 1767–1835, philologist and writer, Prussian ambassador in Rome, Vienna, and Paris, Minister of Education, etc. Translated Pindar's *Odes*, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, etc., wrote an Essay on Goethe's *Herrmann und Dorothea* and *Researches into the Early Inhabitants of Spain by the help of the Basque Language*, 254, 269, 274, 304, 313, 325, 374, 442, 490, 497, 501, 595
- HUMMEL, Johann N., 1778–1837, German composer, pianist, and pupil of Mozart and Haydn, conductor of the Court Orchestra in Weimar, 494
- HUNDESHAGEN, H. B., 1784–1849, 436
- IFFLAND, August W., 1759–1814, actor and playwright; 1779 in Mannheim, from 1796 in Berlin, 257, 280, 298, 334, 353, 381, 417
- ILGEN, Carl D., 1763–1834, Professor of Philology in Jena, 329
- IMHOF, C. A. C., a Major in Weimar, died 1789, 183
- IMHOF, Louise v., née v. Schardt, sister of Frau v. Stein and mother of the author Amalie v. Helvig, 112
- IRVING, Washington, 1783–1859, American writer, published *Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* in 1821, 495
- JACOBI, Elisabeth (Betty), née v. Clermont, 1743–1784, married Friedrich Jacobi in 1764, 26, 159
- JACOBI, Friedrich Heinrich (Fritz), 1743–1819, at first a merchant in Düsseldorf. Met Goethe in 1774. He lived later on his estate at Pempelfort near Düsseldorf until the disturbances caused by the French wars drove him from there in 1794; he then accepted an invitation from the Academy of Science in Munich where he remained until his death. To his large circle of acquaintances and friends belonged (among others) Lessing, Lavater, Wieland, Fichte, Jean Paul as well as Goethe. He published two sentimental novels on the *Werther* pattern, *Allwill* in 1775 and *Woldemar* in 1777; more important were his philosophical essays and books, notably *Über die Lehre des Spinoza* (in the form of letters to Moses Mendelssohn) and his answer to the latter's reply *Wider Mendelssohn's Beschuldigungen* and finally in 1811 *Von den göttlichen Dingen und ihrer Offenbarung* (Of Divine Matters and their Revelation), 26, 33, 35, 53, 57, 60, 77, 116, 148, 151, 172, 181, 221, 228, 235, 237, 238, 381, 411, 417, 452
- JAMESON, Robert, 1774–1854, naturalist and mineralogist, Professor at Edinburgh University, 475
- JARAZEWSKA, Countess Anna, 495
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- JENA, Friends in, 366
- JENTSCH (Gentsch), J. E., died 1780, one of the Duke's gardeners in Weimar, 79
- JERUSALEM, K. W., 1747–1772, known to Goethe since his Leipzig days; held a diplomatic post at Wetzlar, where, crossed in love, he shot himself on 30th October 1772. (Prototype of Goethe's *Werther*), 17
- JOHN, E. Carl C., 1788–1856, Goethe's secretary, 412, 420
- JONES, Wm., 1746–1794, translator of *Gita Govinda*, 343
- JOUY, Victor J. E., 1764–1846; French dramatist, wrote the libretto to Spontini's opera *Women of Athens*, 591
- KALB, Charlotte v., 1761–1843, née Marschalk von Ostheim; wife of an officer in Weimar, friend of Schiller, 241, 253, 255, 294, 319
- KALB, J. A. A. v., Gentleman-in-waiting, in charge of the Finances from 1776 to 1782, 55, 143
- KĀLIDĀSA, Hindu Sanskrit poet of the 3rd century A.D., author of the poem *Sakuntala*, 568
- KANNE, Anna Katharina, née Schönkopf (called Käthchen or Annette), 1746–1810, daughter of a wine merchant in Leipzig, engaged 1769 and married 1770 to Dr Kanne, later town councillor in Leipzig, 4, 5, 6
- KANT, Immanuel, 1724–1804, philosopher, 289, 304, 307, 312, 555
- KAPP (Kappe), C. E., a doctor, 375, 384
- KAUFFMANN, Angelika, 1741–1807, Swiss-Austrian artist, lived mainly in Rome and later in London, 203, 210
- KAYSER, P. C., 1755–1823, musician, lived in Switzerland, composed music for several of Goethe's operettas and poems, 113
- KEFERSTEIN, C., 1784–1866, mineralogist, 484
- KESTNER, C. August C., 1777–1853, Hanoverian Attaché in Rome, son of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 570, 574, 579
- KESTNER, Charlotte (Lotte), née Buff, 1753–1828, daughter of a magistrate in Wetzlar. When Goethe arrived there in 1772 she was already betrothed to Kestner, whom she married in May 1773. (Prototype of Lotte in Goethe's *Werther*), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, 110, 177, 444
- KESTNER, Johann C., 1741–1800, a lawyer at the Imperial Law Courts at Wetzlar, later archivist in Hanover. Married Charlotte Buff in May 1773. (Prototype of Albert in Goethe's *Werther*), 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 34, 36, 37, 38, 110, 177, 305
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- KINNAIRD, J. D. J. W., 1788–1830, 485
- KIRMS, F., 1750–1826, member of the theatre management in Weimar from 1791, 280, 359
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- KLEIST, Heinrich v., 1776(1777)–1811, dramatist, novelist and poet of the Romantic School, 380

- KLETTENBERG, Susanne v., 1723–1774, friend of Goethe's mother; closely connected with the Moravian Brethren in Frankfort. (Prototype of the *Schöne Seele* in Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister*), 8, 39
- KLINGER, Friedrich M. v., 1752–1831, childhood friend of Goethe's; novelist, poet, dramatist; his play *Der Wirrwarr oder Sturm und Drang* (*Storm and Stress*) gave the literary period its name. In Russian Service from 1780. His novel *Giaffar the Barmecide* was published 1792, 246
- KLOPSTOCK, Gottlieb Friedrich, 1724–1803, poet, best known as author of the *Messias*, a poem of great influence on German literature; visited Goethe in 1774, 31, 45, 64, 139
- KNEBEL, Carl v., born 1796, son of Goethe's friend Carl Ludwig v. Knebel, 394, 424, 428
- KNEBEL, Carl Ludwig v., 1744–1834, a Prussian officer, then tutor to Prince Constantine of Weimar, Carl August's younger brother. It was he who on the way to Paris with the two young Princes brought about their meeting with Goethe in Frankfort in December 1774. His friendship with Goethe endured unbroken from then until Goethe's death. He took interest not only in Goethe's literary work but also in his scientific studies. He himself translated Lucretius and Propertius. After Prince Constantine's majority he lived, after a few unsettled years, in retirement mostly in Jena and in Ilmenau, 47, 91, 93, 98, 102, 105, 106, 113, 116, 133, 143, 152, 166, 167, 172, 194, 211, 223, 253, 251, 284, 348, 366, 368, 388, 394, 399, 419, 424, 428, 432, 446, 455, 477, 508, 538, 544
- KNEBEL, Henriette v., 1755–1813, Lady-in-waiting and governess of Princess Caroline, Carl August's daughter; sister of Carl Ludwig v. Knebel, 152, 368
- KOBEL, Franz, 1749–1822, an artist in Munich, 194
- KOCH, an official in Jena, 342
- KÖRNER, Christian G., 1756–1831, legal officer in Dresden, later in Berlin. Friend of Schiller, father of the poet Theodor Körner, 260, 294, 313, 410
- KÖRNER, J. C. F., 1778–1847, court-mechanician in Jena, 448
- KÖRNER, Karl Theodor, 1891–1813, poet, wrote several tragedies and comedies and very popular patriotic songs; killed, as a volunteer, in the war of liberation 1813. Goethe produced his tragedies *Toni* and *Die Sühne* (*The Atonement*) on the Weimar stage in 1812, 410
- KOETHE, Sylvie, née v. Ziegesar, 1785–1855, daughter of the Gotha Chancellor A. F. v. Ziegesar; in 1814 married to Professor Koethe, Chaplain to the Weimar garrison, 384, 385, 386
- KOSEGARTEN, J. G. L., 1792–1860, Professor of Oriental languages in Jena from 1817, 450
- KOTZEBUE, A. v., 1761–1819, his approximately 200 plays (among them *Menschenhass und Reue*, popular on the English stage as *The Stranger*) were for years again and again acted on all German stages. Suspected of being an anti-liberal Russian spy, he was assassinated by a student of Jena University in 1819, 358
- KRAFFT, J. F. (perhaps an assumed name), an unknown man who wrote

- from Gera in 1778 asking for Goethe's help, which was granted to him for many years, 83, 84, 85, 86, 94, 95, 99, 114, 122, 123, 158, 173
- KRAKOW (or Krako, stage name of D. Einen), an actor in Weimar, retired 1792, 224
- KRANTZ, a German artist studying in Italy with Carl August's financial help, 199
- KRAUS, G. Melchior, 1733–October 1806, an artist from Frankfort, living in Weimar, Director of the Art School, 55, 63, 72, 216, 373
- KRÜGER, G. W., 1791–1841, an actor in Berlin, 529
- LA FONTAINE, Jean de, 1621–1695, French poet, best known through his fables, 377
- LANGER, E. Th., 1743–1820, in 1767 he succeeded Goethe's friend Behrisch as tutor in the family of Count Lindenau; later held a tutor's post in Switzerland. From 1781 Librarian in Wolfenbüttel in succession to Lessing, 7
- LANNES, Jean, Duke of Montebello, 1769–1809, French marshal, 372
- LANDSDOWN (Landseer), Thomas, 1796–1880, English artist, 461
- LA PEYROUSE, 1741–1788, French explorer, 325
- LA ROCHE, Maximiliane—see Brentano
- LA ROCHE, M. G. F., 1720–1789, Privy Councillor of Trier, 116
- LA ROCHE, Sophie, née Gütermann, wife of the above, 1731–1807, novelist. Mother of Maximiliane, who married the Frankfort merchant Brentano, 39, 53, 116, 214, 320
- LASSBERG, Christiane v., daughter of Colonel v. Lassberg, died 16th January 1778, 79
- LAVATER, Johann Caspar, 1741–1801, author and pastor in Zurich. Visited Goethe in Frankfort 1774. His physiognomic studies keenly interested Goethe who contributed to Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*. But the contrast in their philosophical and religious outlook led to a cooling off of their friendship. This process was hastened when Lavater published *Nathaniel* in 1786, as its dedication to Erring Nathaniels quite clearly pointed to Goethe as the most striking example of them. However, after a sharp attack in the *Xenien*, where Lavater's reformatory zeal was traced back to vanity, Goethe mentioned his former friend with regard and love in his autobiography, 44, 48, 49, 68, 100, 103, 105, 113, 121, 139, 144, 149, 317, 471
- LAWRENCE, James, 1773–1840, stayed in Weimar in 1816, wrote a play *The Englishman at Verdun or the Prisoner of Peace* for which Goethe tried to find a publisher, 539
- LEIBNITZ, Gottfried Wilhelm v., 1646–1716, philosopher, 424
- LENZ, Johann Georg, 1748–1832, mineralogist at Jena University, 308, 329, 366, 371
- LEONARDO DA VINCI, 1452–1519, 456
- LERSE, Franz, 1749–1800, theologian, fellow student of Goethe's in Strassburg, later a teacher, 19
- LESSING, Gotthold Ephraim, 1729–1781, poet, dramatist, philosopher,

- critic; author among other plays of the comedy *Minna von Barnhelm* and of the tragedies, *Emilia Galotti* and *Miss Sara Sampson*, 4, 14, 124
- LEVETZOV, Amalie v., née Broesicke, 1787–1868, mother of Ulrike v. Levetzov, 493, 496, 498, 503, 513, 552
- LEVETZOV, Amélie, and LEVETZOV, Bertha, younger daughters of Amalie v. Levetzov, 496, 513
- LEVETZOV, Ulrike v., born 1804, died unmarried 1899, 493, 494, 496, 498, 503, 513, 552
- LEY (Leyen), Count Philipp, brother-in-law of Carl Theodor Dalberg, 109
- LICHNOVSKY, Prince C., 1758–1814, musician, 412
- LIECHTENSTEIN, Prince Carl B., died 1789, 195
- LIGNE, Prince Carl Joseph de, 1735–1814, 399
- LINDAU, v., met Goethe 1775, died in America 1777 where he was serving in a Hessian regiment, 92, 99
- LINK, H. F., 1761–1851, author of a travel journal to Portugal, 338
- LINNÉ (LINNAEUS), Carl von, 1707–1778, Swedish botanist, 445
- LIPS, Heinrich J., 1758–1817, German artist, engraver; taught at the Art School in Weimar from 1789–94, 216, 221
- LITTLE ONE, see Schardt, Sophie
- LIVY (LIVIVS), Titus, 59 B.C.–A.D. 17, 198
- LODER, J. C., 1753–1832, Professor of Anatomy in Jena 1778–1803, in Halle 1803–8, then in Königsberg and in Moscow; Goethe's article on the Os Intermaxillare first appeared in Loder's *Handbuch*, 162, 166, 167, 178, 180, 272, 329, 333, 344
- LODER, Frau, née Richter, wife of the anatomist Loder, 372
- LOESSL, Ignatius, *Bergrat* in Bohemia, 484
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- LONGHI, 1716–1831, an engraver in Milan, 476
- LOOS, J. J., died 1838, Professor of Medicine in Heidelberg, 431
- LUCAS VAN LEYDEN, 1494–1533, Dutch painter, 431
- LUCK, H. G. L. v., Major, 431, 436
- LUDECUS, J. A., an official in Weimar, 215
- LUDWIG, C. G., 1709–1773, a doctor and botanist in Leipzig, 2
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- LUTHER, a magistrate in Frankfort, 25
- LYNCKEN, Frau v., wife of a gentleman-in-waiting and chief ranger in Weimar, 438
- MACHIAVELLI, Niccolò, 1469–1527, Florentine political theorist and author, 29
- MANZONI, Alessandro, 1785–1873, Italian poet, novelist and playwright. Novels among others: *I promessi sposi*; plays among others: *Adelchi*; Goethe translated Manzoni's Ode on Napoleon's Death, *Der fünfte Mai*, 476, 527, 558
- MARET, Hugues-Bernard, Duke of Bassano, 1763–1839, state-secretary under Napoleon, 369
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- MARPERGER (MATTHESON), J., 1681–1764, composer, 460
- MARTIAL, Marcus Valerius, 42–102, Roman author of fifteen books of epigrams, one of them called *Zenia*, 255
- MATICZEK, Fräulein, actress in Weimar, 309
- MATTONI, glass worker in Carlsbad, 383
- MECKLENBURG-SCHWERIN, Caroline Louise, Hereditary Princess of, née Princess of Saxe-Weimar, 1786–1816, daughter of Carl August, 368, 374, 419
- MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ, CARL LUDWIG FRANZ, Grand Duke of, died 1816, 540
- MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ, GEORG, Grand Duke of, 1779–1860 brother of Queen Louise of Prussia; as a young man he had stayed (with his sisters) in Frankfort as guest of Goethe's mother, 546
- MELLISH, J. C., 1769–1823, an English diplomat, 297
- MEMLING, Hans, approx. 1430–1494, Flemish artist, 430
- MENDELSSOHN, Abraham, 1776–1855, banker in Berlin; son of Moses and father of Felix Mendelssohn, 481, 510, 514, 563, 578
- MENDELSSOHN, Fanny—see Hensel
- MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY, Felix, 1809–1847, pupil of Goethe's friend Zelter, 481, 510, 514, 563, 578, 582
- MENDELSSOHN, Moses, 1729–1786, philosopher. Shortly before his death he published *An die Freunde Lessings* as an answer to Jacobi's *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*, 181
- MERCK, Johann Heinrich, 1741–1791, official in Darmstadt. Met Goethe in 1771, financed the first edition of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, shared Goethe's interest in literature, the history of art and in science. Financial difficulties, in which Carl August and Goethe both vainly tried to help him, led to his suicide, 14, 17, 18, 20, 34, 50, 67, 81, 96, 97, 131, 132, 208, 534
- MERLIN DE THIONVILLE, a French Commissary in Mainz 1793, 238
- MESMER, F. A., 1734–1815, a doctor in Vienna; from his name the word mesmerism was coined, a kind of precursor of hypnotism, 471
- METSYS, Quintin, 1460–1530, Flemish artist, 431
- METTERNICH, Matthias, 1758–1825, a Clubbist in Mainz 1793, 238
- METTERNICH, Prince Clemens Wenzel Lothar, 1773–1859, Austrian Chancellor, 518
- MEYER, J. Heinrich, 1760–1832, artist and art historian, born in Switzerland, met Goethe in Rome, settled in Weimar 1791, 216, 225, 227, 229, 232, 245, 249, 252, 254, 256, 258, 284, 287, 288, 290, 292, 293, 296, 300, 311, 315, 316, 326, 328, 331, 333, 338, 364, 367, 373, 412, 430, 445, 548, 571
- MEYER, Nicolaus, 1775–1855, a doctor in Bremen, had lived in Weimar and Jena for some time, 370
- MICHELANGELO BUONARROTTI, 1475–1564, painter, sculptor, architect, 316
- MILDER (MILDNER), Pauline Anna, 1785–1838, opera singer, 494
- MILTON, John, 1608–1674, 317, 318
- MIONNET, T. E., 1770–1842, numismatist, 346
- MITTELSDORF, a copyist in the Duke's service in Weimar, 215
- MÖLLENDORF, W. J. H., v. 1724–1816, a Prussian Field-marshal, 87

- MÖSER, Justus, 1720–1794, writer on politics and literary criticism, author of *Patriotische Phantasien* 1774–1778, 40, 129
- MONTESQUIEU, Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de, 1689–1755, French writer, 377
- MONTGOLFIER, J. E., 1745–1799, French inventor of the first kind of balloons, 164
- MONTETON, Prussian lieutenant, 87
- MORITZ, C. P., 1757–1795, novelist and writer on aesthetics; best known by his novel *Anton Reiser, ein psychologischer Roman*, 1785, as well as by the descriptions of his travels to England and to Italy: met Goethe in Rome, 196, 210, 211, 212
- MOSES, 14, 29
- MOZART, Wolfgang Amadeus, 1756–1791, 257, 408, 460, 494, 563
- MÜLLER, Friedrich T. A. H. v., 1779–1849, Chancellor in Weimar, 477, 562, 564, 567, 570, 585
- MÜLLER, Friedrich, 1749–1825, called *Maler Müller*, a German artist living in Rome from 1778, 106, 111
- MÜLLER, Johannes v., 1752–1809, Swiss historian, lived in Vienna from 1792–1804, 350, 355
- MÜLLER, Joseph, 1727(?)–1817, a stone-cutter in Bohemia, 470
- MURRAY, John, Junior, son of a publisher in London, 572
- MUSAEUS, J. K. A., 1735–1787, writer, best known for his *Volksmärchen* (popular fairy tales), author of a satire on Richardson's *Grandison*; in charge of the Pages at Weimar, 533
- MUSEUM, Gesellschaft der Freunde des Vaterländischen Museums in Prag—see Bohemian Museum
- MYLIUS, H., 1769–1864, a banker in Milan, 564, 579
- NASSAU, Duke Friedrich August of, 1738–1816, 438
- NAUMANN, C. F., 1797–1875, Lecturer in Mineralogy in Leipzig, author of *Grundriss der Krystallographie*, 1826, 520
- NECKER, Jacques, 1732–1804, Finance Minister of France under Louis XVI, published 1781 *Compte rendu au Roi* in which he drew up the balance of the French finances, showing clearly for the first time their catastrophic condition, which became one of the main causes of the revolution, 126
- NEEF, C. E., a doctor in Frankfort, 430
- NEES VON ESENBECK, C. G., 1776–1858, Professor of Botany in Bonn, 471, 478, 487, 489, 500, 517, 554
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- NICOLAI, C. F., 1753–1811, author, critic, philosopher, mainly in Berlin, 44, 152, 307
- NICOLOVIUS, Alfred, 1806–1890, son of Georg Heinrich L. Nicolovius and Louise, née Schlosser, daughter of Goethe's sister Cornelia, 536
- NICOLOVIUS, Georg Heinrich L., 1767–1829, *Staatsrat* in a Ministry in Berlin, husband of Goethe's niece Louise, née Schlosser, 407, 480, 536
- NICOLOVIUS, M. A. Louise, née Schlosser, 1774–1811, daughter of Goethe's sister Cornelia and Johann Georg Schlosser; wife of Georg Heinrich Nicolovius, 100, 407

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- NIEBUHR, Barthold G., 1776–1851, first Danish, then Prussian official; historian, his main work being a Roman History, 415
- NIETHAMMER, F. B., 1766–1848, Professor of Philosophy in Jena, then Professor of Theology in Munich, 334, 562
- OBERMANN, J. W., a merchant in Leipzig, 4
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- OBERREIT, J. H., 1725–1798, a Swiss mystic, living in Jena; regularly supported through Goethe's influence, 256
- OESER, A. F., 1717–1799, Director of the College of Art at Leipzig, taught Goethe while he was there as a student, 152, 155, 316
- OKEN, Lorenz, 1779–1851, Professor of Medicine and Science in Jena, 443
- OLDENBURG, H., 1626–1678, Secretary to the Royal Society in London, 363
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- 'OSSIAN', the first German translation of Macpherson's *Ossian* was published 1764, 18
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- PAGANINI, Nicolò, 1784–1840, violinist, 553
- PALLADIO, Andrea, 1518–1580, Italian architect and writer; builder of the Rotonda, a villa near Vicenza, 186, 193, 194
- PARRY, James Patrick, spent some time in Weimar as a young man and married Louise v. Stein, a granddaughter of Frau v. Stein, 539
- PASIELLO, Giovanni, 1741–1816, Italian composer, 100
- PAULUS, H. E. G., 1761–1851, Professor of Theology in Jena; then in Heidelberg, 343, 430, 431
- PERGOLESI, Giovanni P., 1710–1736, Italian composer, 156
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- PFENNINGER, J. G., 1747–1792, Pastor in Zurich, friend and collaborator of Lavater, 29
- PHILIPP—see Seidel
- PICHLER, Caroline, 1769–1845, Viennese author, wrote mainly historical novels, 408
- PICK, F., canon in Bonn, 464
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- PIUS VI, Pope 1775–99, and PIUS VII, Pope 1800–23, 397
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- PRUSSIA, Friedrich Wilhelm III, King of, 1797–1840, 315, 422
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- PURKINJE, J. E., 1787–1869, physiologist and pathologist in Breslau, 537
- QUINTILIAN, C., 35–95, Roman orator, 14
- RAABE, C. J., 1780–1849, engineer and portrait painter, 462
- RAMDOHR, F. W., 1752–1822, playwright, author of a tragedy *Kaiser Otto III*, and of an Essay *Charis, oder Über das Schöne und die Schönheit in den nachbildenden Künsten* (On the Beautiful and Beauty in Art), 1793, 244, 256
- RAPHAEL (Raffaello Santi), 1483–1520, 7, 20, 138, 181, 188, 316
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- REICH, P. H., 1717–1787, publisher in Leipzig, 39
- REICHARDT, J. F., 1752–1814, composer, composed mainly songs and operettas, 220, 335
- REICHERT, Court gardener in Dresden, 215
- REIFFENSTEIN, J. F., diplomat, in the service of Gotha and Russia, in Rome, 149
- REIL, J. C., 1758–1813, Professor of Medicine in Halle, 372
- REINHARDT, Carl Friedrich (French Comte in 1815), 1761–1834; born in Würtemberg; clergyman, went to Paris at the outbreak of the Revolution, in French diplomatic service from 1792. Chargé d’Affaires in Jassy 1805, imprisoned by the Russians, freed through the intervention of the Czar. French ambassador in Cassel 1808–13; then in the foreign office in Paris; ambassador to the German Diet at Frankfurt 1815–29; again in Paris from 1829, 375, 377, 398, 402, 472, 497
- REINHOLD, C. L., 1758–1823, Professor of Philosophy in Jena, then in Kiel, 289, 317
- REIZENSTEIN, S. C. J. v., 1766–1874, 431
- RENNER, T., 1770–1850, Professor of Anatomy and Director of the Veterinary College in Jena, 448
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- RICHARDSON, Samuel, 1689–1761, English novelist, author of *Pamela* 1740, *Clarissa Harlowe* 1748 and *Sir Charles Grandison* 1754, 2, 293
- RICHTER, Johann Paul Friedrich (JEAN PAUL), 1763–1825, one of the most prominent novelists of the Romantic School, 309, 533
- RIEDEL, C. J. R., 1759–1821, finance official in Weimar, then tutor to the Hereditary Prince, Carl August’s grandson; his wife was a sister of Charlotte Kestner, née Buff, 183, 212

- RIEMER, Caroline, née Ulrich, for some time secretary and companion to Christiane v. Goethe, married Friedrich Riemer, Goethe's secretary, 387, 426
- RIEMER, Friedrich, 1774–1845, Lecturer in Philology at Halle University, then tutor to the children of Wilhelm v. Humboldt; 1803–12 in Goethe's house, first as tutor to August, then as secretary to Goethe; from 1812 master at grammar school in Weimar, but remained Goethe's adviser in matters of philology and still acted sometimes as his secretary, 372, 379, 383, 384, 385, 389, 420, 421, 424, 429, 550, 595
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- RINCKLEF, Fräulein, a young friend of Goethe's sister in Frankfort, 1
- RITTER, J. W., 1776–1810, Professor of Physics in Jena, 338
- ROBINSON, Henry Crabb, 1775–1867, English barrister and diarist, studied for some time in Jena, 572
- ROCHLITZ, J. F., 1769–1842, writer in Leipzig, 391
- ROMANO, GIULIO, 1493–1546, Italian artist, 316
- ROTTMANN, F., died 1817, artist and drawing master, 381
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- RÜFFEL, an innkeeper in Mainz 1795, 238
- RUNCKEL, Lisette, friend of Goethe's sister in Frankfort, 1
- RUSSIA, Alexander I, Czar of, 1777–1825, reigned 1801–1825, brother of Maria Pawlowna of Saxe Weimar, 422
- RUSSIA, Maria Feodorowna, Czarina of, 1759–1828, née Princess of Würtemberg; mother of the Czars Alexander I and Nicolaus I and of Maria Pawlowna of Saxe Weimar, 460
- SAINTE CROIX, C. E. J., Guilhem de Clermont-Lodève de, 1746–1809, French historian; published *Examen critique des anciens historiens d'Alexandre le Grand*, 415
- ST. HILAIRE, E. de Geoffroy, 1772–1844, Professor of Zoology in Paris, 571
- ST. LEU—see Bonaparte, Louis
- ST. SIMON, C. H., Comte de, 1760–1825, founder of *Saint Simonism*, a politico-economic movement which proposed a solution to social problems, 578
- SALIS, Ulysses v., 1728–1800, a Swiss poet and paedagogue, founder of the educational institution *Philanthropinum* in Marschlin in Switzerland, 92
- SALZMANN, J. D., 1722–1812, a notary in Strassburg, president of the students' table d'hôte where Goethe dined, 10, 11, 15
- SARTORIUS, Georg, Baron von Waltershausen, 1765–1828, Professor of History at Göttingen University, Weimar Chargé d'Affaires at the Congress of Vienna 1814–15, 350, 383
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- SAXE-GOTHA, August, Prince of, 1747–1806, brother of Duke Ernst II, 147, 163, 169, 524
- SAXE-GOTHA, Ernst II, Duke of, 1745–1804, reigned from 1772, 138, 149, 163, 169, 209

SAXE-GOTHA, Friedrich, Prince of, 1744–1825, reigned as Friedrich IV from 1822–1825, 412

SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Anna Amalia, Duchess of, 1739–1807, née Princess of Brunswick, married Duke Ernst August of Saxe-Weimar in 1757, widowed 1758; Regent for her elder son Carl August from 1758 to 1775; her younger son was Prince Constantine, 57, 62, 63, 81, 106, 152, 205, 210, 213, 216, 218, 368

SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Bernhard, Prince of, 1792–1862, second son of Carl August; served in the Weimar Corps of the Prussian Army in 1806, 368, 420, 423

SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Carl August, Duke, later Grand Duke of, 3rd September 1757–14th June 1828; after his father's death his mother governed as Regent from 1758 until his majority 3rd September 1775. From 1773–5 the poet Wieland was his tutor. In 1775 he married Louise, Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt; their children were: Louise (who died in infancy), Carl Friedrich, Bernhard, and Caroline. At Carl August's invitation Goethe came to Weimar on 7th November 1775. In 1778–9 Frederick of Prussia tried to draw Weimar on his side into the quarrel over the Bavarian succession. To avoid this Carl August, together with Goethe, now head of the department of foreign affairs, endeavoured to form a confederation of those smaller German states whose independence like that of Weimar was threatened by Prussia; they were defeated by the indifference of the other states. In 1785 Frederick himself took up the idea of a confederation, this time directed against Austria. Saxony, Hanover and some of the smaller states, among them Weimar, joined it, but only Carl August tried to give it a permanent constitution with a common legal, financial and customs administration and a joint army; but this too proved to be in vain. At about that time Prussia tried to induce Carl August to put himself forward, with the help of Hungarian nobles in revolt against Joseph II, as a candidate for the throne of Hungary, but Carl August had 'no wish to be another Winter-King' and declined. He entered, however, the Prussian Army with the rank of *General-Major* and took part with the Weimar Corps in most of the campaigns against France. After the battle of Jena in 1806 he was compelled to join Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine to save his Duchy from partition. In 1813–14 he once more fought against Napoleon and was rewarded at the Congress of Vienna with the rank of Royal Highness, the title Grand Duke and with a small extension of territory. He was the first German Prince to grant a liberal constitution to his country under Article XII of the Vienna Act of Confederation, May 1816. He attracted Metternich's anger by granting freedom of the press and allowing the Jena students to invite those of other Universities to a meeting on the Wartburg, to celebrate the tercentenary of the Reformation and the anniversary of the battle of Leipzig, and to protest against the reactionary regime of the Holy Alliance. The freedom of the press had to be curtailed, but owing to the good understanding between Carl August and his people the influence of the Holy Alliance's policy was less oppressive

- in Weimar than in other German states. All through his life Carl August not only showed much interest in Goethe's literary work but shared also his scientific interests, 39, 47, 54, 55, 56, 57, 62, 63, 64, 67, 73, 74, 87, 90, 91, 93, 96, 97, 98, 100, 102, 103, 106, 112, 113, 118, 119, 121, 134, 139, 141, 143, 147, 149, 152, 166, 167, 170, 180, 183, 191, 195, 202, 204, 205, 206, 209, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 218, 225, 230, 233, 234, 239, 251, 266, 268, 273, 290, 297, 299, 309, 317, 322, 324, 340, 341, 342, 355, 368, 373, 374, 397, 399, 400, 412, 423, 424, 426, 429, 435, 443, 448, 456, 464, 472, 476, 482, 483, 486, 513, 515, 517, 518, 521, 524, 529, 540, 541, 542, 544, 545, 546, 547, 552, 559
- SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Carl Friedrich, Grand Duke of, 1783-1853, reigned from 1828; eldest son of Carl August; married Maria Pawlowna of Russia; their son, Carl Alexander, 1818-1901; 170, 212, 213, 214, 315, 343, 368, 539, 545, 559, 567
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- SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Constantine, Prince of, 1758-1793, younger brother of Carl August, 63, 106, 112, 132
- SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Louise, Duchess, then Grand Duchess of, 1758-1830, née Princess of Hesse-Darmstadt; married Carl August 1755, 54, 57, 106, 141, 147, 152, 170, 183, 195, 204, 212, 251, 266, 290, 309, 366, 368, 370, 374, 434, 483, 486, 542, 543, 556, 559
- SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Louise, Princess of, 1779-1784, eldest child of Carl August, 91, 141
- SAXE-WEIMAR-EISENACH, Maria Pawlowna, Grand Duchess of, 1786-1859 née Princess of Russia, sister of the Emperors Alexander I and Nicolaus I; married Carl Friedrich of Weimar, son and successor of Carl August, in 1804, 438, 545, 559
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- SCAFE, John, author of *King Coal's Levee or Geological Etiquette*, 572
- SCHARDT, E. C. C. v., Chamberlain in Weimar, brother of Frau v. Stein, 179
- SCHARDT, Sophie v., née Countess Bernstorff, 1755-1819, called 'Little One' because of her stature; sister-in-law of Frau v. Stein, 112
- SCHELLING, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von., 1775-1854, Lecturer in Philosophy in Jena 1798-1803, then at several other universities, finally in Berlin. Author of *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur* 1797, *Von der Weltseele* 1798, *System des Transcendentalen Idealismus* 1800, 294, 332, 334, 343
- SCHELVER, F. J., 1778-1832, Professor of Botany in Jena 1803-6, then in Heidelberg, 366, 368, 373
- SCHERER, A. N., 1771-1824, chemist, 319, 320
- SCHILLER, Charlotte, 1766-1826, née Lengenfeld; married Schiller in 1790, 275, 281, 282, 283, 294, 295, 311, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 330, 354, 396, 501
- SCHILLER, J. C. Friedrich v., 10th November 1759-9th May 1805, born at Marbach nr. Stuttgart as son of an army surgeon, in or near Weimar and Jena from 1787; 1789, Goethe helped to bring about his appointment as Professor of History at Jena University; of his works published during his friendship with Goethe the most prominent are: his

- essay *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, his ballads, and the tragedies *Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, *Die Braut von Messina*, *Wilhelm Tell*, and *Das Lied von der Glocke* (The Song of the Bell), 209, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 250, 252, 254, 255, 256, 257, 260, 261, 262, 263, 265, 268, 269, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 279, 281, 282, 287, 288, 289, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 298, 299, 300, 304, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 323, 326, 327, 329, 330, 331, 333, 334, 336, 337, 338, 343, 344, 345, 347, 349, 350, 351, 355, 357, 358, 360, 362, 381, 396, 447, 490, 497, 501, 510, 525, 529, 530, 533, 548, 555
- SCHILLER, J. C., 1725–1796, army surgeon in Würtemberg, father of Friedrich Schiller, 268
- SCHILLER, Children of: Karl, 1793–1857, Ernst 1796–1841, Caroline 1799–1850, Emilie 1804–1872: Ernst, 268, 274, 276; Karl, 281
- SCHLEGEL, August Wilhelm von, 1767–1845, critic, playwright, poet, translator mainly of Shakespeare; one of the most prominent members of the Romantic School, 277, 282, 297, 299, 301, 332, 334, 340, 341, 351, 352, 353, 507
- SCHLEGEL, Friedrich von, 1772–1829, critic, playwright, novelist, like his brother prominent among the writers of the Romantic School, 329, 334, 383
- SCHLEIERMACHER, E. C. F. A., 1755–1844, official in Darmstadt, 208
- SCHLICHTEGROLL, A. H. F. v., 1765–1822, archaeologist, Secretary to the Academy of Science in Munich, 411
- SCHLOSSER, Cornelia, 1750–8th June 1777, née Goethe; Goethe's sister. Married to Johann Georg Schlosser, advocate in Emmendingen and author, an early friend of Goethe's, in 1773. Her children were: Louise, 1744–1811, married to L. G. H. Nicolovius; and Julie, 1777–1793, 1, 2, 3, 12, 20, 44, 63, 71, 72, 76, 77, 100, 407, 480
- SCHLOSSER, Friedrich (Fritz) H., 1780–1851, lawyer in Frankfort, one of the representatives of Frankfort at the Congress of Vienna 1814; writer; nephew of Goethe's brother-in-law Johann Georg Schlosser, 409, 458
- SCHLOSSER, Johann Georg, 1739–1799, advocate in Emmendingen, then in Carlsruhe, later in Frankfort. A friend of Goethe's from his earliest student days; married Cornelia, Goethe's sister, in 1773. After her death he married Johanna Fahlmer, a friend of both Cornelia and Goethe, 72, 76, 77, 100, 148, 320
- SCHLOSSER, Johanna, 1744–1821, née Fahlmer, called *Tantchen* (Little Aunt) by Fritz and Georg Jacobi (and by Goethe) for, although about their age, she was their aunt through a step-sister much older than herself. She met Goethe in 1772. In 1778, after Cornelia Schlosser's death she married Goethe's brother-in-law Johann Georg Schlosser, 26, 45, 46, 52, 53, 57, 60, 76, 77, 100, 148, 480
- SCHLOSSER, Margarete, née Steitz, died 1819, sister-in-law of Goethe's brother-in-law, mother of Fritz and Christian Schlosser, 433
- SCHMELLER, J. J., 1796–1814, painter and drawing master in Weimar; frequently asked by Goethe to make the portrait of visitors for Goethe's portrait collection, 571

- SCHMIDT, C. H., 1746–1800, Professor of Poetics in Giessen, 20
- SCHMIDT, J. L., in Jena, 273
- SCHMIDT, J. C., Privy Councillor in Weimar, in charge of the Finances from 1787, 183, 202, 212
- SCHMIEDEL, Fräulein, friend of Goethe's sister, 1
- SCHÖNBORN, G. F. E., 1737–1817, German author who lived in Algiers in 1774; 31
- SCHÖNEMANN, Anna Elisabeth (Lili)—see Türckheim
- SCHÖNKOPE, Anna Katharina (Käthchen or Annette)—see Kanne
- SCHÖNKOPE, C. G., 1716–1791, and family: had a wine merchant's business and a table d'hôte in Leipzig, 4, 5, 6
- SCHÖPKE, A., 1793–1844, Chaplain in Teplitz, later in Prague, 457
- SCHOLLEY, C. L. A. v., Superintendent at Malsfeldt in Hesse, 92
- SCHOPENHAUER, Adele, 1797–1849, daughter of Johanna and sister of Arthur Schopenhauer, 554
- SCHOPENHAUER, Arthur, 1788–1860, philosopher; *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 1819; 406, 424, 439
- SCHOPENHAUER, Johanna, 1766–1838 née Trofiener; novelist. Came from Danzig as a widow to Weimar in 1806 where her house soon became a meeting place for Weimar's society; left for Bonn after financial losses in 1829; mother of Arthur Schopenhauer, 406
- SCHOREEL, Jan van, 1495–1562, Flemish artist, 431
- SCHREIBERS, C. F. A. v., 1775–1825, in charge of the museums in Vienna, 470, 474
- SCHRÖTER, Corona, 1750–1802, singer and actress, 98, 156
- SCHROETER, J. H., 1745–1816, astronomer, 319
- SCHÜTZ, C. G., 1774–1832, Professor of Philology in Jena until 1803, then in Halle; edited the *Allgemeine Litteraturzeitung* first in Jena then in Halle, 350
- SCHÜTZ, J. H. F., 1779–1829, in Berka, director of the spa, 460
- SCHULER, Anna C., née Textor, Goethe's aunt; married to G. H. C. Schuler, later Commandant of the Frankfort militia in 1767, 2, 3
- SCHULTHESS, Barbara, 1745–1818, née Wolf, wife of a merchant in Zurich, 113, 121, 149
- SCHULTZ, C. L. F., 1781–1834, Minister in Berlin; from 1825 in Wetzlar, 497, 505, 548, 583
- SCHWEDENBORG—see Swedenborg
- SCHWEITZER, Geheimerstaatsrat, 474
- SCOTT, Ann, born 1803, second daughter of Sir Walter Scott, 593
- SCOTT, Sir Walter, 1771–1832, 476, 495, 526, 539, 593
- SEEBACH, Hauptmann (Captain), 483
- SEEBECK, T. J., 1770–1831, Professor of Physics and Chemistry in Jena, then went to Nuremberg and Berlin, 366, 368, 446, 469
- SEIDEL, Philipp, Goethe's personal servant and secretary, came with him from Frankfort to Weimar and remained in his service until Goethe's Italian journey; then official in Weimar, 63, 69, 73, 74, 78, 102, 122, 173, 197, 201
- SEIDLER, Louise, 1786–1866, artist, 452
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- SKINNER, Captain, tutor to Michelson, a young Englishman in Weimar, 541
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- SÖMMERING, S. T., 1755–1830, anatomist and doctor in Cassel, then in Mainz, Frankfort and Munich, 164, 222, 285, 534
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- SORET, F. J., 1795–1866, tutor to the Hereditary Prince Carl Alexander, Carl August's grandson, from 1822, 517, 542, 559, 577
- SOSIAS, Horace's publisher, 255
- SOWERBY, J., 1757–1822, English artist and naturalist, 469
- SPINOZA, Baruch, 1632–1677, 29, 172, 181, 210, 445, 555
- SPITTLELER (Spittler), L. T., 1752–1810, German historian, 383
- SPONTINI, G. L. P., 1774–1851, Italian composer, living in Berlin (see also Jouy), 591
- SPRENGEL, C. P. J., 1766–1833, Professor of Botany in Halle, 239
- STADELMANN, Carl, Goethe's personal servant and secretary, 383, 436, 438, 483
- STÄDEL, J. F., 1728–1816, a merchant in Frankfort. The collection of paintings left by him, together with a fund, later formed the *Städel Institute*, a Museum and College of Art in Frankfort, 446
- STAËL-HOLSTEIN, Anne Louise Germaine de, née Necker, 1766–1817, daughter of the French Finance Minister under Louis XVI; exiled by Napoleon in 1803. Author of *De l'Allemagne* 1813 and *Corinne ou l'Italie* 1807; she wrote at length on Goethe, Schiller, Wieland and other German writers in *De l'Allemagne*, but only Goethe and no other German author is mentioned in *Corinne*, 269, 354, 355, 376, 377, 382, 383, 384, 428
- STAFF, v., Court official in Weimar, 62
- STARK (Starke), J. C., 1753–1811, Professor of Medicine in Jena, 336, 366, 392, 397
- STECHE, J. G. C., advocate in Göttingen, 25
- STEFFENS, H., 1773–1845, Professor of Physics in Halle, 329
- STEIN, Charlotte v., née Schardt, 25th December 1742–6th January 1827, Lady-in-Waiting at the Court of Weimar most of her life; married the Duke's Equerry, Josias Freiherr von Stein of Kochberg in 1764. By the time Goethe met her in 1775 only three of her seven children were still living: Karl, 1765–1837, Ernst 1767–1787; Friedrich (Fritz), 1771–1844; 48, 57, 58, 59, 61, 63, 65, 66, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 78, 79, 80, 88, 89, 90, 93, 98, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, 109, 112, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 163, 165, 166, 175, 178, 179, 182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 193, 194, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 210, 213, 214, 219, 266, 279, 356, 376, 405, 523
- STEIN, Ernst v., 1767–June 1787, son of Charlotte v. Stein, 134, 203
- STEIN, Friedrich (Fritz) v., 1771–1844, youngest son of Charlotte v. Stein, lived as a child for several years in Goethe's house; studied law,

- entered the Prussian Service in 1796 and from then on lived mostly in Breslau, 134, 159, 160, 163, 165, 166, 171, 172, 175, 176, 184, 199, 213, 214, 219, 266, 376, 462
- STEIN, Josias v. of Kochberg, 1735–1793, Equerry to the Duke in Weimar; husband of Charlotte v. Stein, 69, 78, 98, 118, 119, 134, 175, 219
- STEINHÄUSER, J. G., a lawyer in Plauen, 321
- STERNBERG, Count Caspar M., 1761–1838, Canon in Regensburg; resigned 1806 rather than have a Te Deum performed in honour of Napoleon's victory at Jena. Went to live on his estate in Bohemia, chiefly occupied with studies in botany, mineralogy and oryctology. Took a leading part in founding the Bohemian Museum in Prague and in organising the first meetings of German Scientists and Doctors (*Deutsche Naturforscher und Ärzte Versammlungen*), 474, 483, 484, 491, 534, 594
- STERNE, Laurence, 1713–1768, author of *Tristram Shandy* 1759, 14, 205
- STIEDENROTH, E., 1794–1858, Professor of Philosophy in Greifswald, 505
- STOLBERG, Countess Auguste—see Bernstorff
- STOLBERG, Count Friedrich Leopold, 1750–1819, and Count Christian, 1748–1821, members of the *Hainbund*, the Göttingen group of young poets founded 1772. Published various *Poems*. Christian translated Sophocles. Friedrich translated Homer, Plato, Aeschylus and Ossian; he also published descriptions of his travels and several religious writings. In 1800 both brothers went over, like many of the Romantic writers, to the Roman Catholic Church, 49, 63, 64, 488
- STOLBERG, Countess Louise, wife of Christian Stolberg, 225
- STRECKFUSS, A. F. C., 1778–1844, writer in Berlin, 527
- STUART (STEWART), James Denham, 1712–1780, British economist, author of *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy*, 76
- SWEDENBORG, E., 1688–1772, Swedish philosopher and religious mystic, 176
- SZYMANOVSKA, M., 1795–1831, pianist, 494, 497
- TASSO, Torquato, 1544–1595, author of *Gerusalemme Liberata*, 187
- TAUFKIRCHEN, Count, 496
- TERENCE, P. Terentius Afer, c. 190–c. 159 B.C., Roman playwright, author of a play *Adelphi*, 256
- TEXTOR, Anna C.—see Schuler
- TEXTOR, Johann Wolfgang, 1693–1771, Stadtschultheiss (the highest civic dignitary) of Frankfurt; Goethe's grandfather, 3, 4
- THEOCRITUS, about 270 B.C., Greek (Sicilian), poet, 14
- THIBAUT, A. F. J., 1774–1840, Professor of Jurisprudence in Heidelberg; author of *Civilistische Abhandlungen* 1814; teacher of August v. Goethe when the latter was studying at Heidelberg, 383, 384, 430, 431
- THORWALDSEN, Bertel, 1770–1844, Danish sculptor, 579
- THOURET, N. F., 1767–1845, architect in Stuttgart, 319
- THYM, mathematics and writing master of Cornelia Goethe, 2
- TIECK, C. F., 1776–1851, sculptor in Berlin, 592
- TIECK, Johann Ludwig, 1773–1853, poet and translator, belonging to the Romantic School, 308

- TISCHBEIN, J. H. W., 1751–1829, German artist in Rome, where he met Goethe, who had been in touch with him since 1781, 132, 149, 190, 194, 195, 196
- TOBLER, J. C., theologian and writer in Zurich, 103
- TOMASCHEK, W., 1774–1850, musician in Prague, 484
- TREBRA, F. W. H. v., 1740–1819, mining official in Weimar from 1776 to 1779, then in Hanover and Saxony, 426
- TRÜMBACH v., name of a family, heirs of Susanne v. Klettenberg. 53
- TUEMPLING, v., in Jena, 366
- TÜRCKHEIM, Anna Elisabeth v. (Lili), née Schöнемann, 1758–1817, daughter of a merchant in Offenbach near Frankfurt; married in 1778 to a banker in Strassburg (two of her sons were: Carl 1783–1862 and Wilhelm 1785–1831; see letter 378), 43, 49, 51, 52, 60, 100, 378
- UBIQUE, Herr v.—see Böttiger
- UNGER, J. F., 1750–1804, bookseller and publisher in Berlin, 243, 318
- UNZELMANN, Frederike, née Petersilie (on the stage called Silie), 1760–1815, an actress in Weimar, 314, 349
- VARNHAGEN VON ENSE, C. A. L. P., 1785–1858, writer in Berlin, belonging to the Romantic School, 537, 587
- VAVASSOUR, Mlle, 575
- VELTHEIM, Count A. F., 1741–1801, 329
- VENT, J. G., a lieutenant in Weimar, 249
- VICTOR, C. V., Duc de Bellune, 1766–1841, French marshal, 372
- VINCI, DA—see Leonardo
- VIRGIL, 70 B.C.—19 B.C., 319
- VITRUVIUS, about 50 B.C., Roman architect, author of *De Architectura*, 194
- VITRY, F. J. P., Aubert de, 1765–1829, French author, translated Goethe's autobiography *Aus meinem Leben, Wahrheit und Dichtung* under the title *Mémoires de Goethe* 1823, 502
- VOGEL, 448
- VOHS, Heinrich, died 1804; an actor in Weimar, 315
- VOIGT, Amalie v., née Hufeland, first married to Osann, after his death she became the second wife of Christian Gottlob v. Voigt, the Privy Councillor, 312, 519
- VOIGT, Christian Gottlob v., 23rd December 1743–22nd March 1819, Member of the Privy Council from 1791; in charge—jointly with Goethe—of the University Institutes in Jena; writer of occasional poems, a keen collector of coins and mineralogical specimens, 202, 215, 225, 231, 236, 260, 268, 286, 288, 312, 317, 333, 342, 373, 397, 418, 422, 429, 440, 447, 449, 450, 463, 519
- VOIGT, Christian Gottlob v., Junior, 1774–1813, son of the Privy Councillor, 422
- VOIGT, Friedrich Siegmund, died 1850, Professor of botany, and in charge of the Botanical Garden in Jena from 1807; son of Professor Johann Heinrich Voigt, 368, 397
- VOIGT, Johann Carl Wilhelm, 1752–1821, mining expert in Ilmenau; author of *Mineralogische Reisen durch das Herzogtum Weimar und Eisenach*; brother of the Privy Councillor, 132, 172, 423

- VOIGT, Johann Heinrich, 1751–1825, Professor of Mathematics in Jena from 1789, of Physics from 1802, 377
- VOIGTS, Jenny v., née Möser, 1752–1814, daughter of Justus Möser, 40, 129
- VOLKMANN, J. J., writer in Hamburg, author of *Historisch-kritische Nachrichten von Italien 1770–71*, 185
- VOLTAIRE, F. M. Arouet de, 1694–1778, 138, 163
- Voss, Johann Heinrich, 1751–1826, poet and translator; author of the idyll *Luise* (an epic poem) 1783; translated the *Odyssey* 1781, the *Iliad* 1793 and later Shakespeare (the latter together with his son), 270, 319, 383, 384, 388, 430, 431
- VULPIUS, A. C., 1762–1827, translator and writer; author of the much-read novel *Rinaldo Rinaldini*; official in Weimar and Jena from 1799, University librarian in Jena from 1806. Brother of Goethe's wife, 279, 328
- VULPIUS, Christiane—see Goethe
- VULPIUS, Ernestine, died 1806, sister of Goethe's wife; lived in Goethe's house for several years, 288
- WACKENRODER, H. W. F., 1798–1854, Professor of Pharmacy in Jena, 589
- WÄCHTER, a ropemaker, 212
- WAGNER, G., one of the gardeners in the Botanical Garden in Jena, 397
- WALDNER-FREUNDSHEIM, L. Adelaide, lady-in-waiting in Weimar, 70, 78, 141, 182
- WALTHER, Professor in Giessen, 342
- WAMBOLDT, C. L. v., born 1789, member of the Cathedral Chapter in Würzburg, 431
- WASER, J. H., 1742–1780, pastor in Zurich, executed for treason May 1780
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- WERNER, A. G., 1750–1817, a German geologist, founder of the school of *Neptunists*, who believed rocks to be precipitates of a primeval ocean, whereas their opponents the *Vulcanists* believed the earth crust to be formed by volcanic action, 475
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- WIELAND, Christoph Martin, 1733–1813, author, poet, editor of the literary periodical *Der teutsche Mercur*. Principal works: *Die Abderiten*, a satire on life in a German provincial town, and *Oberon*, a romantic tale in verse. His political-educational fantasy, *Der goldene Spiegel*, attracted the notice of the Dowager Duchess Anna

Amalia of Weimar and she made him tutor of the Hereditary Prince Carl August. Wieland then remained in Weimar as long as he lived. Goethe had satirised Wieland's earlier poems where he tried to copy Greek models, but as soon as Goethe arrived in Weimar a friendship of mutual esteem was formed between them which lasted until Wieland's death, 7, 26, 30, 39, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61, 63, 106, 107, 110, 113, 116, 170, 197, 289, 302, 315, 320, 341, 366, 367, 376, 383, 406, 419, 422

WILLEMER, Johann Jacob, 1760–1838, a banker in Frankfort, playwright, writer on politics, education and religion. His numerous friends, among them Goethe and many members of the Romantic School, enjoyed his hospitality at the *Gerbermühle*, his country house near Frankfort with a beautiful view of the town and the river Main, 465, 467, 569, 588

WILLEMER, Marianne, née Jung, 1784–1860, born in Linz in Austria, came with a troupe of ballet dancers to Frankfort in 1798, where Willemmer saw her, and took her into his house to be educated together with his own daughter. After his wife's death he married her in 1814. Marianne Willemmer is the *Suleika* of Goethe's *Westöstlicher Divan*, to which she contributed some poems of her own, 465, 569, 588, 590

WINCKELMANN, J. J. W., 1717–1768, art historian; his work on the art of the Ancients had great influence on the appreciation of classical art in the 18th century, 319

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ZELTER, Carl Friedrich, 1758–May 1832, a master mason in Berlin; he carried on his trade until 1812. Member of the Singing Academy of Berlin from 1790, in charge of it from 1800. Musician and composer, he composed music for a large number of Goethe's poems. Music master of Felix Mendelssohn. His correspondence with Goethe consists of 840 letters from 11th August 1799 to 22nd March 1832; 292, 301, 348, 358, 362, 374, 375, 413, 416, 441, 445, 460, 481, 483, 494, 497, 499, 504, 510, 512, 514, 527, 528, 529, 531, 532, 538, 545, 550, 553, 555, 560, 563, 573, 576, 578, 581, 582, 584

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